



<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>

Theses Digitisation:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/research/enlighten/theses/digitisation/>

This is a digitised version of the original print thesis.

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>  
[research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk)

The Islamic Concepts of  
Masculinity and Femininity

Asifa Siraj

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Glasgow

Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Applied  
Social Sciences

August 2006

© Asifa Siraj

ProQuest Number: 10395999

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10395999

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346





## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the subject of masculinity and femininity through interviews with 68 heterosexual Muslims (33 male and 35 females) in Glasgow and 7 homosexual Muslim males in London. The purpose of this study is to explore heterosexual masculinity and femininity from a Muslim perspective. While there has been much research on Muslim women, there has been very little work on Muslim men. In this thesis, I approach the subject of masculinity and femininity from a sociological and religious perspective. That is, my research examines 'Western' sociological theories of masculinity and femininity, and the interpretations of the Qur'an and *hadith* texts provided by traditional and modern Muslim scholars and compare them with what my participants have to say about their own constructions of femininity and masculinity. The principle objective of my research is to focus on the role that religion plays in shaping gender and sexuality. While sociological theorists see gender as something that is socially constructed and performed, traditional Muslim scholars portray gender as 'natural' and given by Allah. With my participants we see both constructivist and essentialist views being expressed. I look at how these views influence the daily lives, roles and behaviours of my Muslim participants. Research on homosexual Muslim masculinity has to date been non-existent. With interviews with 7 male homosexual men I examine how homosexual Muslims 'accommodate' themselves within Islam's heteronormative social structures. I look at how they reconcile their faith with their sexuality and whether this represents a challenge to Islamic heteronormativity. I explore the implications this 'accommodation' has on homosexual's men's understanding of gender roles and relations, and in particular, how they grapple with the issue of masculinity and sexuality in Islam.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	vi
Acknowledgment	vii
 Chapter One: Introduction	
1.1 Overview of Study	1
1.2 Why Did I Undertake This Research?	1
1.3 My Experience of the Research Process	1
1.4 Outline of Thesis	3
 Chapter Two: Methodology	
2.1 Research Procedure	6
2.2 Sample Selection	6
2.2.1 Homosexual Sample	6
2.3 Sample Selection Process	7
2.3.1 Sample Composition	9
2.4 Social Class And Background Of Sample	10
2.4.1 Education, Employment And Occupation	10
2.4.2 Age Of Participants	12
2.4.3 Home Ownership	13
2.4.4 Summary	13
2.5 Data Collection	13
2.5.1 Data Analysis	15
2.6 Researcher Subjectivity	15
2.6.1 Where Do I Locate Myself	16
2.6.2 Insider Status	17
2.6.3 My Appearance	17
2.6.4 Gender Congruence	19
2.6.5 Ethnic Congruence	19
2.6.6 Outsider Status	21
2.7 Limitations of the Study	21
2.8 Conclusion	24
 Chapter Three: Islam as Religion, Belief and Practice	
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Terminology	25
3.3 Islam	26
3.4 Theological Divisions	29
3.5 Four Schools of Thought	30
 Chapter Four: British Muslims	
4.1 British Muslim Population	33
4.2 The Satanic Verses	35
4.3 Muslim 'Community'	35

4.3.1	The Role Of Mosques In The Creation Of A Muslim 'Community'	38
4.3.2	Muslim Diaspora In Glasgow	39
4.3.3	Muslims In The 'West'	41
4.3.4	Muslim Diaspora In The 'West'	43
4.4	Islam In Practice	51
4.5	Rediscovery of Religion Amongst Glasgow's Muslim Women	56
4.6	Conclusion	62

## Chapter Five: Femininity

5.1	Introduction	64
-----	--------------	----

### The Study of Gender from 'Western' Sociological and Religious Viewpoints

5.2.	Terminology	66
5.3	Feminism	67
5.3.1	Islamic Feminists	68
5.3.2	The Construction of Femininity in the 'West'	70
5.3.3	The Construction of Motherhood in the 'West'	75
5.3.4	Marriage In The 'West'	76
5.3.5	Motherhood in Islam	77
5.3.6	Marriage in Islam	80
5.4	Women's Position Prior to the Advent of Islam	82
5.4.1	Women's 'New' Position in Islam	83
5.5	Female/Male Witnesses	91
5.5.1	Deficient in Intelligence	92
5.6	Inheritance	93
5.6.1	Divorce	93
5.7	The Debate About the <i>Hijab</i>	94
5.7.1	Female Covering and Terminology	95
5.7.2	The Female Body	95
5.7.3	The <i>Hijab</i>	97
5.7.4	Muslim Female Dress	98
5.7.5	The Veil Around the World	100
5.7.6	The Politics of the Veil	104
5.8	Female Participants Who Wore The <i>Hijab</i>	105
5.8.1	Non-Wearing <i>Hijab</i> Female Participants	109
5.9	Conclusion	113

## Chapter Six: Female Participants Views on Femininity

6.1	The Construction of Femininity	115
6.1.2	Female Views On Femininity	117
6.1.3	Are You Feminine?	118
6.2	Islam and Femininity	122
6.3	Male Participants Views on Femininity	124
6.3.1	The Construction of Femininity	124
6.4	Islam	128
6.4.1	<i>Hijab</i>	129

6.5	'Women Are Cleaner': The Domestic Division of Labour Amongst Muslim Couples	132
6.5.1	Previous Research	132
6.6	Background of Participants	134
6.7	Housework	134
6.7.1	Part-Time Work/Childcare	138
6.8	'Helping Out'	142
6.8.1	'Sharing'	146
6.9	Conclusion	151

## Chapter Seven: Masculinity

7.1	Introduction	154
7.2	A Review of Masculinity/Masculinities In Sociology	155
7.2.1	Literature Review	155
7.2.2	Hegemonic Masculinity	161
7.3	Muslim Masculinity	166
7.3.1	Creation of Humankind	167
7.3.2	A Division of 'Pairs'	167
7.3.3	Male Responsibility	169
7.3.4	'Equality'?	170
7.3.5	Masculine Qualities	171
7.3.6	Religion and Muslim Male Practices	174

## Chapter Eight: Male Views on Masculinity

8.1	Introduction	180
8.2	The Meaning of Masculinity	180
8.3	Fatherhood	185
8.4	Masculine Identity	186
8.5	Doing Masculinity: The Beard	187
8.6	Islam	189
8.7	Female Views on Masculinity	191
8.7.1	The Meaning of Masculinity	191
8.7.2	Male Responsibility	192
8.7.3	Masculinity as Negative	196
8.8	'Because I'm the Man!' Constructing the Role of the Head of the Family	199
8.8.1	The Position of the Head	200
8.8.2	'A Degree Above Woman'	203
8.9	Role Reversal	206
8.9.1	Female Headed Household's	214
8.10	Conclusion	216

## Chapter Nine: The Construction of Homosexuality by Muslim Heterosexuals

9.1	Introduction	219
9.2	Previous Research	219
9.2.1	Homophobia/Heterosexism	220
9.3	Participants Background	221

9.3.1	Islam	223
9.3.2	Participants Religious Views	225
9.4	Sexuality in Islam	229
9.4.1	Discourse of Complementarity	230
9.5	Attitudes Towards Muslim Homosexuals	234
9.6	Conclusion	235

## Chapter Ten: On Being Homosexual And Muslim: Conflict And Challenges.

10.1	Introduction	237
10.2	History of Homosexuality	237
10.3	The Construction of Homosexuality	239
10.4	Participants Background	241
10.4.1	The Role of Religion in the Participant's Life	243
10.5	Comparison With White British Gay 'Community'	249
10.6	A Challenge to Islamic Heteronormativity	251
10.7	Marriage	255
10.8	Gay Masculinity	257
10.8.1	Gay 'Ethnic' Masculinity	258
10.9	Challenge to Heteronormativity	260
10.10	Conclusion	266

## Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

11.1	Concluding Remarks	268
11.2	Limitations of Study and Future Research	270
11.3	Personal Journey	271
	Appendices	274
	Glossary of Terms	285
	Bibliography	288
	Publication[s] Produced As a Result of This Thesis	310

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Ethnic Origin of Participants	10
Table 2: Educational Level of Participants	11
Table 3: Social Class Category of Participants	12
Table 4: Muslims in Scotland and Glasgow	33
Table 5: Practising or Non-Practising Muslims	51
Table 6: I Would Describe Myself By My:	52
Table 7: Importance of Islam for Participants	52
Table 8: How Often Do You Pray?	55
Table 9: How Frequently Do You Visit the Mosque?	55
Table 10: Fasting in the Month of Ramadan	59
Table 11: Have You Done <i>Hajj</i>	59
Table 12: Have You Done <i>Umrah</i>	59
Table 13: Do You Give <i>Sadaqa</i> ?	60
Table 14: Do You Give <i>Zakah</i> ?	61
Table 15: Female Participants Who Wear the <i>Hijab</i>	106
Table 16: Female Participants Who Did Not Wear the <i>Hijab</i>	110
Table 17: Male and Female Occupational Status	134
Table 18: Female Participants in Part Time Employment	138
Table 19: Female Participants in Full Time Employment	139
Table 20: Views on Homosexuality According to the Gender of Participant	222
Table 21: Level of Education of Participants Against Homosexuality	222
Table 22: Level of Education of Participants Holding Neutral/For Homosexuality	222
Table 23: Non-Practising Muslim Participants Views on Homosexuality	223
Table 24: Homosexual Participants Demographic Information	241
Table 25: Degree of Openness and Relationship Status	242
Table 26: Level of Religiosity of Homosexual Participants	244
Table 27: Level of Religious Practice of Homosexual Participants	244

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. All Praise and Thanks to Allah.

Before acknowledging the effort and help of others, I must first thank Allah without Whom this thesis would not have been possible. The strength and help I feel I gained from my faith was immense. It is Allah Who helped me through this laborious journey of intellectual pursuit and instilled in me the ability and knowledge to complete this task. The thesis has been an arduous journey; however it would not have been possible without a number of people. I am grateful to Dr L. Nicole Bourque for her invaluable advice, help, understanding and guidance. She encouraged me to broaden my perspective and to look beyond the obvious. I also appreciate her motivation and encouragement particularly during times I found researching and writing up extremely difficult. I would like to thank the academic staff at the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Applied Social Science at the University who were instrumental in nurturing my development as a Sociologist. I would like to particularly thank Prof. Bridget Fowler who as a postgraduate convener provided an invaluable source of support, encouragement and advice. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. David Evans for taking the time to read earlier Chapter drafts and providing me with words of advice and guidance. I would also like to thank the administrative staff who were always there to lend a helping hand. I would also like to thank ESRC for financially supporting my PhD study.

I would like to thank my mother for her love, support and kindness for which I am eternally indebted to her. I would also like to mention the rest of my family who although were not quite sure what it was that I was studying were supportive of my pursuit. However, a special thanks goes to my sister Sidrah Siraj who would always be there to listen to me complain about things not going right, for giving me advice and for helping me with the mammoth task of transcribing the interviews. She was always there to bring out the positive when I was struggling. Special thanks also to my friend Khurram Shahid who has been a source of great comfort over the last few months and has helped alleviate the stress about submitting in on time! I would also like to mention friend and fellow PhD student at the University, Indra Joyce for not making the PhD experience an absolutely isolating experience. Our discussions on politics, sexuality, religion, music and Americans will forever be etched in my memory. Lastly, I would like to thank all the participants who took part in this research I am extremely grateful for their time and effort for making this thesis possible. Finally for the people I may have missed out (unintentionally), thank you.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The social construction of gender has been a principal focus of sociology since the 1960s, the construction of a distinct feminine identity has been central to feminist sociologists, but more recently the study, and construction of masculine identities has emerged. Yet, there is a distinct lack of work on the construction of masculine and feminine identity by Muslims in the 'West'. Much of the research on gender and Islam has focused on women's rights, roles and status ignoring the gendered lives of Muslim men. This thesis aims to fill the gap by looking at Muslim men and masculinity and Muslim women and femininity. I do this by addressing how a sample of Scottish Muslims construct their ideas about gender; and how masculine and feminine attributes influence the understanding of the roles they play in the private and public sphere. I examine these issues by referring to the Qur'an and *hadith* as well as from the debates of traditional and modernist Muslim scholars.

I interviewed 68 heterosexual Muslims in Glasgow and 7 male homosexual Muslims in London. Although I began with the understanding that what is classed as 'Islamic' can be directly associated to the text as the research progressed, I found that interpretations of the texts varied considerably 'depending on the interpreter's general understanding of Islam, his/her educational background, personality, and cultural and social affiliations' (Roald, 2001: 68). Therefore, I was not only interested in exploring what religion had to 'say' about masculinity and femininity, but also the meaning, values and ideals that Muslim men and women associate with the terms masculinity and femininity. I explore the construction of femininity through the role of mother and wife: how do these roles accentuate the feminine identity of women? I examine masculinity through the role of provider and protector and the position of the 'head' in the family. By considering how religion contributes to the understanding of the construction of these roles and gender attributes, this work will contribute to a new understanding of the relationship between gender, religion and sexuality. A brief note on the title of this thesis, in retrospect the title of the thesis would more appropriately been titled as the 'British Muslim concepts of Masculinity and Femininity' because it is my participants understanding of how they create ideas about gender that was most important to the study. The influence of religion was examined only to see how my participants create their ideas about masculine and feminine roles.



## 1.2 WHY DID I UNDERTAKE THIS RESEARCH?

As a Scottish Muslim woman, my main motivation for carrying out this research was to explore Muslim men and their gender position in religion, and their lived experiences. The literature on 'Women in Islam' discusses a number of issues concerning women: divorce; polygamy; dowry and the *hijab*/veil, without engaging in any meaningful dialogue about the lives of Muslim women in everyday life. Moreover, to date, I have yet to find any academic studies on the topic of Muslim men in the same way that literature has dealt with the issue of women in Islam. Therefore, in my study, I have brought together the study of Muslim men and women in Glasgow because masculinity and femininity are contingent upon one another.

## 1.3 MY EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In answering this question I am compelled to use my own voice and discuss why I was interested in the topic, why I approached the subject the way I did and how I felt it influenced the research. Indeed, I feel it is vital to recognise that 'the endeavour of research involves some sort of relationship, and interpretation, between the researcher and the subject' (Wilson, 2000: 9). In my research, I acknowledge my own position and describe my relationship with the subject matter (See Chapter 2, Section 2.6). It is through my own life and experiences as a practicing Muslim from a Pakistani background, born and bred in Glasgow that my interest and ideas for this thesis developed. My identity as a Scottish second generation Pakistani<sup>1</sup> is also significant: I wanted to develop the view and voice of those people who are a minority within a minority. I feel that because a majority of research on gender and Islam in Britain has been carried out in England, Scottish Muslims have been ignored and are under-theorised. Indeed, Breitenbach, Brown & Myers (1998) comment that very little work exists on the issue of women (read 'white women') in Scotland. They go on further to argue that social, cultural and historical studies of Scottish society have been 'gender blind'. I would further add that it has also been 'colour blind' because it fails to take into account the experiences of non-white Scots. As Arshad and McCrum (1989) comment that 'most research carried out on black women has been done south of the border and mainly from a white perspective'. In their view, 'this has allowed an assumption that black women's experiences are uniform and coupled' (Arshad & McCrum, 1989, cited in Breitenbach, Brown & Myers 1998: 48). This

---

<sup>1</sup> The term is in inverted commas because I do not describe myself as a Pakistani, rather I prefer 'Scottish Muslim'. I only define myself as a Pakistani, when asked (usually by white people), "where are you from?" (Despite my Scottish accent). I reply: "my parents are originally from Pakistani, but I was born and bred in Scotland". This identity marker is not used out of choice but often to allow people to match my skin colour to that of my ethnic non-white background. To be Scottish and 'coloured' continues to be problematic in the Scotland.

illustrates how the frequent confusion of 'British' with 'English' serves to obscure Scottish experience.

Perhaps the most contentious issue, which concerned me as a researcher and Muslim, was how my identity as a practicing Muslim would impinge and influence my sociological inquiry. In one particular incident, my supervisor suggested that I look for homosexual Muslims to include in my research; I responded by saying: "they don't exist!" Because I had not met nor talked to a homosexual Muslim did not mean they did not exist. My supervisor also once stated that, "You're not doing a PhD on Islamic theology, your PhD is in sociology". I reflected on her remark and acknowledged my biases. In the Sociology department at the University, I was in a largely White, non-religious environment. This was especially apparent when another PhD student following a conversation about women's sexuality stated: 'I can't believe somebody like *you* is studying sociology!' Clearly, these two identities were not supposed to co-exist. This comment made me conscious about my position as a student in the sociology department. However, I gradually discovered that my critical pursuit of the subject did not require me to criticise Islam per se and that my identity as a Muslim would not be detrimental to my research. A continual process of contemplation and mental dialogue with the self allowed me to take a step back and address my subjective position. Indeed, I believe my dual identities add more depth and meaning to my study.

#### 1.4 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

What follows is the outline of my thesis. In Chapter 2, the methodology section, I describe the research procedure. I discuss sample selection process and the sample composition. I describe the demographic details of the sample of heterosexual men and women and homosexual men. The methods used to produce and analyse the data are presented and discussed. I also discuss in more detail my subjective position as a researcher and the affect this had on my participants. Finally, I discuss some of the limitations of this study. In Chapter 3, I focus on Islam. I describe and discuss Islamic doctrines and beliefs. I also examine the different theological divisions within Islam. I follow this with a discussion on the four schools of law of *Sunni* Islam. In Chapter 4, I detail briefly the migratory experience of Muslims to Britain, examining their social and economic background. Through this, I discuss whether we can talk of a unified Muslim 'community', for instance, do mosques in Glasgow help or hinder integration amongst different factions of the Muslim population. I further examine the position of Muslims in the 'West'/diaspora by referring to specific cross-cultural studies to discuss

similarities with my sample. I also look at the religious identity of my participants and the extent to which they are practicing/non-practicing Muslims. I examine whether or not religion provides a basic framework with which Muslims can shape their identities and live their lives. I also discuss the emergence of the importance of religion amongst some Scottish and immigrant Muslim women in Glasgow and examine the creation of a 'community of believers'.

In Chapter 5, I focus on the concept of femininity. I begin by situating and reviewing the concept of women's role and their femininity within 'Western' sociology. I discuss not only the impact that 'Western' feminists have had on sociology in the 'West' but also the emergence of Islamic feminists who couple feminist principles with a fight for religious equality for women. I also focus on how feminists have conceptualised women's role as mothers and their position within marriage. I critically examine these views in light of the religious position of Muslim women. I examine whether the principles feminist sociologists adopt are adaptable to Muslims in my research. Next, I describe and discuss how traditional and modernist Muslim scholars have examined the role of motherhood and marriage. The debate about the *hijab* is also dealt with in this Chapter. I discuss the different styles of the *hijab*/veil adopted around the world and how Muslim women in some Muslim countries have used it as a political tool. I also refer to other studies conducted on why women choose to wear the veil in the 'West'. I follow this with discussions about why some of my female participants wear the *hijab*, while some others choose not to. I discuss some of the reasons given by both groups. In Chapter 6, I examine in detail how female and male participants understand and construct ideas about femininity. Are there differences in the views of male and female participants? I also examine the domestic arrangements of my participants, who does the housework and why? Is domestic work gendered? If so, how do arrangements affect my participants understanding of their masculine and feminine roles?

In Chapter 7, I review the literature on masculinity and masculinities in sociological studies in the 'West'. I also examine how feminist work has altered perceptions of masculinity by forcing the 'dominant discourse' to take into account men's relationship with women and the role men play in women's economic and social subordination in society through patriarchal relations. I also analyse research on 'masculinities' to include 'other' men (homosexuals and blacks). In Chapter 8, I introduce and examine the male's role and how traditional and modernist Muslim scholars have interpreted the Muslim male's position within the family and society. I also examine how my sample of Muslim men and women create ideas about masculinity in their

everyday life and the roles they play within the home and society. I use the role of the head of the family to examine how this position affects male and female understanding of masculinity.

Chapter 9 introduces sexuality to the discussion. I highlight the 'dominant discourse' in Islam on sexuality. How do heterosexual male and female participants essentialise heterosexuality through the production and reproduction of the sex and gender categorisations? I give detailed attention to how Muslim scholars have interpreted sexuality in the Qur'an and *hadith*. In addition to this, I examine how the notion of heterosexuality is considered as natural, universal, immutable and monolithic. I explore participants' views on homosexuality and their understanding reinforces their construction of masculinity and femininity in Islam. In Chapter 10, I examine how my sample of homosexual Muslim males retain their sexual and religious identities as homosexual Muslim. I explore in detail the religious arguments that some of these men put forward in reconciling and bridging their previously incongruent identities? In Chapter 11, the conclusion, I discuss the implication of my findings and analyses and share my reflections on the research process as a whole. I also point out the limitations of this study and suggest future directions for research on this and related topics.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an account of the methods used to carry out my research and the procedures I employed to collect and analyse the data. In writing this chapter, I have followed Wolcott's (1994) advice to doctoral students, which is to: 'tell the story. Then tell how that happened to be the way you told it' (Wolcott, 1994: 16). This thesis is 'the story' and in particular a story about Islam and the construction of masculine and feminine roles.

#### 2.1 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

This study employs a qualitative method of enquiry that explores the lived experiences of people. Data was collected through in-depth interview. I felt that this was most appropriate for this study since it allowed me to uncover the meanings people give to their experiences in the lived world through the their subject's own perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I used a semi-structured interview where it is common to have a written list of questions and topics asked in a particular order known as an interview guide or schedule (Kvale, 1996). My interview schedule consisted of 19 questions and divided into sections headed: domestic work, Islam and masculinity/femininity (See Appendix A). The themed sections guided the interviews so that the information obtained from each participant was to some extent regulated, yet still allowing me to explore individual differences.

#### 2.2 SAMPLE SELECTION

It is essential to point out that this study is composed of two sets of samples. The bulk of the participants are heterosexual male and females but with the exception of chapter 9, the entire thesis is based on the views of the heterosexual sample. References made to 'participants' throughout this thesis refer to heterosexual participants. Where appropriate, I indicate when I am discussing my homosexual participants. In the following section, I provide a brief methodological account of the research process involving the homosexual sample.

##### 2.2.1 HOMOSEXUAL SAMPLE

As part of my research on homosexual Muslims, I conducted a separate set of interviews. Although I make no further reference to these interviews or research in this chapter, it is essential to briefly discuss the methods I employed. I interviewed 7 homosexual men in

London, 4 of whom were part of the Al-Fatiha<sup>1</sup> group. The interviews were conducted in the months of July and October of 2001. Each participant took part in a qualitative semi-structured interview and on average, the interview lasted about 90 minutes. I initially experienced a few problems in locating and securing interviews given the social constraints experienced by homosexuals. In a homophobic society, the people under study are essentially hidden (Peacock, 2000). I should also point out that in this sample there are no lesbians, (I discuss this issue in chapter 10, Section 10.3). Although I fully intended to include them, they were an extreme example of a 'hidden population'. In Chapter 10, I examine how homosexuals subvert the heteronormative framework in Islam by unsettling the very concepts that create masculine and feminine roles. The purpose of my research on Muslim homosexuals was not to provide a generalised account of the experiences of Muslim homosexuals. Rather, it was an attempt to unravel and illuminate the personal and collective processes the men go through to integrate their apparent incompatible identities. Moreover, in spite of the ever-increasing literature on 'gay masculinities' there is very little work on the topic of Muslim homosexuals. In chapter 10 (Section 10.3), I detail in depth some of the methodological issues which arose from my interviews with homosexuals and my subjective position as a female heterosexual researcher.

### 2.3 SAMPLE SELECTION PROCESS

The participants<sup>2</sup> used in this study were selected using the snowball sampling technique (where one participant gives the researcher the name of another possible participant, who in turn may provide the name of others). Initially I asked friends and family if they knew people who might be interested in participating in my study, this networking proved moderately successful in recruiting participants. Since this was the preferred method of recruitment at the end of each interview I would ask then participant if they had contacts that would possibly lead to further interviews. I would then contact potential participants by email or telephone. They were asked if they would be willing to participate in the study, if they agreed an appropriate time was arranged for the interview. I tried other methods to find participants such as contacting various organisations and centres<sup>3</sup>. However, recruiting participants was an especially frustrating and strenuous process. I found the internet to be a valuable source and

---

<sup>1</sup> The name of the organisation derives from the first verse of the Qur'an translated as: "The Opening"/"The Beginning". Al-Fatiha, which began in America, is the first organisation formed as a social support group for Muslim homosexuals. It now has a chapter in London.

<sup>2</sup> From hereinafter references to participants mean heterosexual participants, unless stated otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> Bangladeshi Association Glasgow; Ethnic Minority Enterprise Centre (EMEC); Islamic Society of Britain; MERIDIAN; Muslim Women's Resource Centre; Pakistani Women Welfare Association.

visited the websites of Universities in Glasgow<sup>4</sup> as I was confident students/academics would be interested in participating. In addition, I sifted through the University of Glasgow internal telephone directory and contacted members of staff and students (those I presumed to be Muslims on the basis of their name). This had some degree of success. Although I was receiving emails and phone calls in response to the email I sent to university students and staff many were emailing to inform me that they did not wish to participate.

Although I applied no test to gauge the level of religiosity in recruiting participants I found that, an overwhelming number of participants considered themselves to be practising Muslim. The participants interviewed during the early stages of the fieldwork considered themselves to be practising Muslims and this was a result of using the snowball sampling technique. By employing the snowball method, the sample was comparatively homogenous: participants recruited their friends and some family members who were similar in their beliefs and attitudes. This was most apparent with participants who classed themselves to be practising Muslims. I began the study with the intention of finding a broader sample but this became increasingly difficult to achieve. I wanted to reflect the diversity of Muslims living in Glasgow, rather than focus on one particular ethnic group in order to examine the differences between Muslims. I thus adopted purposive sampling technique in which 'a sample is built up which enables the researcher to satisfy her specific needs in a project' (Robson, 2002: 265). This way I was also able to ascertain the appropriateness of potential participants for the study. Altering the sampling technique proved successful because I was able to widen the spectrum by selecting participants purposively that varied in terms of marital status, ethnicity, levels of religiosity and nationality.

In my search for participants, I also attended an Islamic Circle organised by the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB), which took place every Friday evening in the West End of Glasgow. The co-ordinator of ISB suggested that I attend their weekly meeting on Friday to talk to the women informally, as the notice board was placed in the men's area/'space'. I felt that contact at least within religious circles should be mediated through females, as it was not considered appropriate for a woman to be in the men's section (cf. Roald, 2001). Given this it would be more appropriate to speak with women as they could confirm whether their husband's would be interested in participating. Although I was mindful, that ISB was an Islamic organisation. I was interested in interviewing Muslims of different nationalities (ISB members varied in

---

<sup>4</sup> University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian University.

nationality and a significant number were converts to Islam), I had never attended an Islamic circle and felt like an 'outsider'. I felt that I was attending under false pretences since I was not there to further my knowledge about Islam but to recruit potential participants. Once I arrived, I found a place to sit with the other women, each of whom was then asked to recite a verse from the Qur'an. I also participated in the recitation. This assuaged the awkwardness I felt by being there as I was able to integrate with the others.

After the recitation, a discussion followed and during the last 30 minutes or so, the women talked amongst themselves. I approached several women (5 of whom were White British converts and all married to Algerian men) and told them about my research. A number (5) of them stated their husband's would not be interested in participating, 2 other women explained that their husband's would not talk to a female researcher. Another woman who was listening interrupted and stated that 'it's un-Islamic for a woman to interview a non-*mahram*'<sup>5</sup>. She rebuked me (regardless of my intention) that as a Muslim I should be aware of what is prohibited for a woman in Islam. In my defence, I reiterated the purpose of my research and the importance of confidentiality (hence, separate interviews). Not interested in my justification I moved away, yet other women present were dismayed at the woman's reaction. Only one couple agreed to participate, nevertheless, other women present at the circle provided valuable information and suggested potential interviewees.

### 2.3.1 SAMPLE COMPOSITION

The participants were all located in and around the Glasgow area. This area was chosen principally because of its locality, its proximity to my home due to existing connections and contacts. Participants were interviewed over a period of 16 months, from June 2001 to September 2002. A total number of 68 people were interviewed, consisting of 33 (49%) males and 35 (51%) females aged between 15 and 70 years (median 35.6). In 4 households, both the parents and their children (aged 15 or over) were interviewed. Initially, the determinants for inclusion in the study were that participants were married and resided in and around the Glasgow area (for accessibility). The sample also included participants who were widowed, divorced, separated and single. There were 50 married participants (24 couples, and 2 individual participants who were married but their spouse's were not interviewed), 18 were single, 4 divorced, 1 separated and 2 were currently in a relationship. The length of marriage

---

<sup>5</sup> *Mahram* is a man whom a woman can never marry because of closeness of relationship (for example father, brother, uncle, son etc.). Her husband is also her *Mahram*.



of married participants ranged from 31 years to 4 months. The ethnic composition of the sample is shown in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Ethnic Origin of Participants	
Country	Numbers
Pakistani	38 (57%)
Iraqi	6 (10%)
Indian	6 (10%)
British	4 (6%)
Egyptian	3 (4%)
Moroccan	3 (4%)
Kurd	2 (3%)
Other	6 (6%)
Total	68

## 2.4 SOCIAL CLASS AND BACKGROUND OF SAMPLE

References to Muslims often assume homogeneity, which hides social, educational, and class differences. I will discuss the occupational and social class of my sample. In the 2001 Census occupational class was measured by the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) with eight occupational variables, I employ the same classification to discuss and categorise my sample.

### 2.4.1 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

Before discussing the social characteristics of my sample, I must place them against the wider context of Muslims in Glasgow. According to census figures for Glasgow, 42.6% of Muslims had no qualifications and only 19.1% were qualified at degree level. The former is the highest figure and the latter the lowest figure amongst all minority religious groups. Pakistani men have been highlighted as persistent underperformers in education and in the paid labour market (Modood et al. 1997). Moreover, Pakistanis are nearly three times more likely to be in low paid occupations (Modood & Shiner, 2002). They are equally three times more likely to experience periods of unemployment compared to White people and for longer periods (Neary, 2005). In Glasgow, 17.7% of Muslim men have never worked or have been in long-term unemployment<sup>6</sup>. Muslims were the only religious group who were the least economically active (42%), in addition to having a higher number of people economically inactive (57.9%) (2001 Census). This to some degree has been a reflection of migrant experience, as Pakistani

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/08142443/24494>

immigrants were less educated than their Indian counterparts and as a result occupied low paid and low status jobs. Indeed, Pakistanis remain the poorest ethnic minority groups in Britain (Heath & McMahon 2005). Muslims in my sample, however, were highly educated and almost all in employment. There were 5 participants who had a PhD, 12 with a Master's degree and 25 with an undergraduate degree, 12 had a college education and 13 only had a school education (some were still at school), with only one person not having any formal education as we can see from Table 2:

Table 2: Educational Level of Participants			
Male Education		Female Education	
PhD	4 (12%)	PhD	1 (3%)
University (Postgraduate)	8 (24%)	University (Postgraduate)	4 (11%)
University (Undergraduate)	14 (43%)	University (Undergraduate)	11 (31%)
College	2 (6%)	College	10 (29%)
School	5 (15%)	School	8 (23%)
No Formal Education	-	No Formal Education	1 (3%)
Total	33	Total	35

In terms of occupation, my sample included 4 Doctors and 2 specialists (Paediatric Endocrinologist and Paediatric Neurologist). The sample also included 7 housewives, 1 househusband (all of whom were economically inactive) 2 retired males and 9 participants who were still in education (either in school, college or university). As we can see from Table 3, 82% of males and only 41% (categories 1.2 & 2) of females were engaged in middle class occupations that is, in higher and lower managerial professional occupations compared with data from the Census, in Glasgow only 10% Muslims are in the Managers/Higher Professionals category<sup>7</sup>. From the 49 people who were in employment, no participant fell into the 'large employer occupations' (1), yet, 48% of male participants and 18% of females were in higher professional occupations (1.2). Table 3 below also shows that there were more males in both top end of the categories (1.2 and 2) compared to females:

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/08142443/24494>

Table 3: Social Class Category of Participants		Male	Female
1	Large Employers & Higher Managerial	-	-
1.2	Higher Professionals	13 (48%)	4 (18%)
2	Lower Managerial & Professional	9 (34%)	5 (23%)
3	Intermediate	2 (7%)	9 (41%)
4	Small Employers & Own Account Workers	-	-
5	Lower Supervisory/Technical	-	-
6	Semi-Routine Occupations	2 (7%)	4 (18%)
7	Routine Occupations	1 (4%)	-
8	Never Worked/Long Term Unemployed	-	-
	Total	27	22

Muslim women's employment is distinctly different from that of women in other ethnic religious groups. According to the 2001 Census, a very high proportion of Muslim women were not in employment (61%). Commenting on this figure, Clegg & Rosie (2005) state that this is not due to disadvantages in the paid labour market, rather it demonstrates cultural and religious norms. Moreover, while 47% of Pakistani women of working age had never worked or were classified as long-term unemployed, 18% of Muslim women looked after their home/family in Glasgow. In contrast, in my sample 63% of females were in employment, 26% (9) in full time employment and 37% (13) in part-time work. While only 20% (7) fell under the category of 'housewife'. There was a relatively high number (85%) of males who were in full time employment, with the remaining retired (6%) in education (6%) or staying at home (househusband, 3%). One reason why my sample differs significantly from the figures reported in the Census, may be that my participants are skewed towards middle-class, more highly educated people who are in professional occupations.

#### 2.4.2 AGE OF PARTICIPANTS

The average age of my sample was 36 years: 71% of the participants were under the age of 40. The number of years immigrant participants had been living in the U.K. differed: 38 participants were immigrants and had been living in Britain from 10 to over 30 years (median 17.21 years); the remaining 30 participants had been born in Britain. Although majority of marriages were endogamous, some were intermarriages. In total, there were 5 converts to Islam all females (4 White British females and 1 White Argentinean female) 2 of whom were married to Pakistanis, 1 who was British born and the other a Pakistani immigrant. The remaining 3 converts were married to men from Palestine, Kuwait and India. There were 3 intermarriages between participants: Iram was a British born Pakistani who was married to

Kareem (Somalian Muslim); Humaira, a British born Pakistani married to Bilal (Moroccan Muslim); and Waqas a British born Pakistani who was married to Maryam (Seychellois Muslim)

#### 2.4.3 HOME OWNERSHIP

Muslim ownership of homes is at a relatively high figure according to the 2001 Census figures with 63.3% of Muslims in Glasgow owning their home and 30.4% in some form of rented accommodation<sup>8</sup>. Most of my participants were owner-occupiers of their home, with the exception of three couples, one who lived in rented accommodation (Rashid & Zainab) and two in council homes (Kareem & Iram, and Ahmed & Kathrine). In general, many of my participants resided in affluent and prosperous areas of the city: West End of Glasgow, Bearsden, Milngavie and Newlands, with some living in less prosperous areas like Maryhill, Sighthill and East Pollokshields. 15 households were located on the South Side of the city, 9 in North Glasgow, 10 in the West End and 1 in Paisley.

#### 2.4.4 SUMMARY

Although one can make generalisations regarding any social and ethnic group this brushes aside the differences within the group. Indeed, it is essential to recognise that it is the social, economic and education diversity that influences the different life experiences that Muslims use to shape their understanding of religion and religious practices. To summarise, my sample is composed mainly of middle class participants, who in the main are educated and some highly educated, many of whom are in middle class professional occupations. Participants were living in affluent areas of Glasgow with some residing in less prosperous areas. Around three thirds of my participants were under the age of 40, and on average had been living in the UK for 17 years, with just under half being born and bred in Scotland.

#### 2.5 DATA COLLECTION

The precise location and time of the interview depended on the convenience of each participant. Participants were asked where they would feel comfortable doing the interview, many opted for their homes. A large number of Interviews (59) were conducted in the participant's home, 4 were conducted at my office at the University, and 5 at the participant's workplace. All participants were briefed about the purpose of the research and verbal consent was obtained before the interview was conducted. Participants were also given the right to withdraw at any point in the study and if they could not or preferred not to answer, they were

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/08142443/24494>

under no obligation to respond. No participant chose to withdraw from the interview. As proposed by McCracken (1988), the first phase of data collection should be pilot interviews. I arranged 5 interviews with a friend's family who varied in age, levels of religiosity and education. These interviews allowed me to modify, omit and re-word questions if they were deemed irrelevant or unsuitable to the overall objectives of the research. Following the interviews I asked each participant to provide feedback on their overall impression of the interview (questions, wording and so on) and from the information retrieved, I revised some of the interview questions. I produced transcripts of all interviews allowing me to familiarise myself with the data. Although the task of transcribing is lengthy, it gives the researcher a greater understanding of the meanings in the data (Seale, 1998: 207). However, it must be kept in mind that 'transcripts are not copies or representations of some original reality; they are interpretative constructions that are useful tools for given purposes. Transcripts are decontextualized conversations, they are abstractions, as topographical maps are abstractions from the original landscape from which they are derived' (Kvale, 1996: 164).

A questionnaire was also administered to all participants prior to the interview and consisted of three sections: personal details (demographic details), Islamic importance (measuring religiosity) and family life (domestic division of labour). Measuring levels of religiosity was essential. Islam is based on five pillars (*Arkān al-Islām*) or basic duties that Muslims are obliged to perform (the first is the declaration of faith). In order to ascertain whether participants abided by these 'pillars' the following questions were asked: Do you pray and if so, how often? Do you give charity? Do you fast? Have you done *hajj*?<sup>9</sup> In the interview, female participants were asked whether they wore the headscarf (*hijab*). Not only because it is used as an 'indicator of commitment to Islam' (Roald, 2001: 62), but also to examine how this impacted on their view about femininity and female sexuality, men were also asked about how they felt about the *hijab*/veil, and whether the *hijab* accentuated their ideas about femininity. Additionally, they were asked to identify whether they considered themselves to be practising or non-practising Muslim. These questions were intended to identify and determine whether differences existed between levels of religiosity and ideas about gender. Although all participants were interviewed privately, I emphasised the necessity for married couples to be interviewed separately in order to ensure confidentiality without risking freedom of expression and also to allow me to compare data. I explained that the interviews would be tape-recorded and would place it where they could see it. If they asked for it to be switched off, I would do

---

<sup>9</sup> Pilgrimage to the Holy Cities of Makkah and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

so. Only one participant asked the interview not to be taped, in this instance, I took notes. By recording the interviews, I was able to give all my 'attention to the informant's testimony' (McCracken, 1988: 25). The transcriptions were verbatim and while I inserted pauses and attempted to show where conversations overlapped, I did not include non-verbal cues such as gestures, pitch or tone of voice (with the exception of laughter). I assured the participants of confidentiality and in keeping with that, all participants have been given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

### 2.5.1 DATA ANALYSIS

The data consisted of interview transcripts that were analysed using the grounded theory technique (Strauss, 1987). According to this theory, the researcher begins by reading and carefully analysing the data gathered. During this process of analysis, the researcher is persistently asking questions about the data and examining them by comparison with other instances of data. This results in a continuous interplay between the collection and coding of data and the writing of memos. Data was analysed thoroughly by reading and re-reading transcripts. On each transcript, I would assign descriptive annotations to thematic segment (masculinity, femininity, domestic role and so forth.). A basic qualitative analysis process included: attaching word codes to the transcripts in the left-hand margin with comment in the right-hand margin; sifting through and categorising the data to identify the relationships between themes and emerging patterns; and through the consistencies recognised in the data develop a set of generalisations and approach these consistencies with a theoretical framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through reading, highlighting and organising transcript segments, I was able to develop coded categories. I ended the data collection phase of my study after conducting 68 interviews, I felt that the number of participants was adequate and the amount of time I had spent locating, securing and conducting the interviews. I felt towards the end that both the categories were saturated and the emergence of regularities was abundant.

### 2.6 RESEARCHER SUBJECTIVITY

The use of qualitative research is important as it 'recognizes that any individual enters a context with a personal perspective that shapes—and is shaped by—perceptions' (Rossman and Rallis, 2003: 11). Indeed, the researcher is the instrument in the collection of data in qualitative methodology (Patton, 1990). The central issues I had to deal with were the possible conflict that may have emerged from my 'insider' status. It was therefore important to recognise the assumptions and biases I may have brought to the study as a way of

justifying their effect. In qualitative inquiry, it is impossible to conduct value-free interpretive research because every researcher has his/her own preconceptions, which he/she brings to the research arena, and research process (Roald, 2001; Denzin, 1989). Scheurich (1997) notes that 'one's historical position, one's class . . . one's race, one's gender, one's religion, and so on . . . interact and influence, limit and constrain production of knowledge' (Scheurich, 1997: 52). Put differently, who I am influences what it is I want to study: it is essential to consider what we believe, who we are and how our direct experiences affect how we conduct research (Patton, 2001). Indeed, I took Weiler's (1988) advice that the researcher should locate him/herself in their own subjectivity'. Yet, as a researcher, one has to adopt a position of neutrality in relation to what is being explored. However, neutrality does not mean that the researcher disengages him/herself from the phenomena under study nor with the participants. I was wary about reproducing the views of the Muslims with whom I may have shared a similar perspective with. It was essential then, to recognise and acknowledge that I was not just a researcher but also a person who holds her religion and identity as a Muslim integral to her viewpoint. Indeed, it is my subjectivity that contributes to the distinctiveness of my study. As Borland (1991) comments that 'when we do interpretations, we bring our own knowledge, experience, and concerns to our material, and the result, we hope, is a richer, more textured understanding of its meaning' (Borland, 1991: 73).

#### 2.6.1 WHERE DO I LOCATE MYSELF

My position as the researcher was instrumental and subject to several influences which may have influenced participants' responses. This includes my socio-cultural background, my own personal experiences, as a person who believes in the merits of wearing the *hijab* and as a believer of Islam. The issue of 'insider' and 'outsider' status of the researcher is often at the heart of the debate about the subjective/objective position of the researcher. I 'belong' to and share many aspects with a number of the female participants: gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, and educational background. Moreover, my personal experiences as a second generation Pakistani and as a Muslim growing up in Britain are similar to the men and women I interviewed. To comment on whether my participants would have preferred to be discussing the issues in the interview with a male and/or non-Muslim Caucasian merits some consideration. Yet, it has been found that 'gender and ethnic congruence' is an advantage in the interview (Bhopal, 1997). However, with both my heterosexual and homosexual participants I had to confront a number of issues as a researcher because of my position as an insider/outsider.

### 2.6.2 INSIDER STATUS

My position as an 'insider' was instrumental given that I gained information I may not have had if I were a non-Muslim researcher (Roald, 2001). Roald (2001) argues that the knowledge Muslim researchers gain differs from the knowledge a non-Muslim acquires 'due to different approaches and due to the difference in 'cultural language', i.e. perceptions of objects statements, between Muslim and non-Muslim researchers' (Roald, 2001: 70). Nevertheless, being an insider/outsider is not a rigid status, for Arab's I am an outsider given that I am British born Pakistani and for converts because I am a Muslim born to Muslim parents. Muslim researchers studying the influence of Islam in the lives of Muslims must acknowledge the possible affect that their identity as Muslims has on the research and their subjects. Yet, at the same time, because my participants and I were Muslims I was able ask provocative questions which had I been a non-Muslim researcher might have been dismissed as 'Western' concepts (cf. Roald, 2001). Roald (2001) points out that because she was the one (Muslim) asking the questions they were at least thinking about them and responding by providing an 'acceptable' answer.

### 2.6.3 MY APPEARANCE

Like the Muslim men and women who took part in this research, I am also racialised and gendered. My position as an Asian Muslim woman places me in the same social world that some of my participants inhabit, while my ethnicity and visible marker of religiosity are points of similarity, for others this may have marginalised opinions and attitudes towards the subject matter. Although there was no precise or particular way of knowing this, I did feel that some participants might have judged me on my appearance. In relation to this, I believe that my appearance (*hijab* as a visible marker of religiosity) affected some of my participants' attitude towards the study. That is, they may have felt because Islam was at the centre of the study they wanted to paint a positive picture of not only themselves but also of Islam by accentuating the role Islam played in their life. Al-Ali (2002) comments on his experience of interviewing Bosnian Muslims in England: 'I could not help but wonder how much my Muslim name prompted several of my respondents to stress their 'Muslimness' and thereby our supposed commonalities' (Al-Ali, 2002:256). My *hijab* may have signalled or marked my apparent traditional/conservative outlook or prompted some participants to exaggerate their religiosity, or even use me to criticise what they believe to be wrong. Nadia (Female, 33), for example when discussing the *hijab* would frequently refer to me as an example and representative of all women who wear the *hijab*: 'I think women are beautiful and I think if



*you* believe in the afterlife, in heaven and hell then fine but if you don't it's a shame *you're* wearing the *hijab*. Perhaps my appearance for some men signalled a 'traditional femininity' in terms of my dress and thus some male participants projected a stereotypical gender ideal of me as a woman. Therefore, my position in the conversations with some male participants may have been one of an 'empathic listener and facilitator for men's narratives' (Pini, 2005: 204). Particularly so, if the men had a rigid gender ideology about women's position (Winchester, 1996 cited in Pini, 2005: 204). I was after all, a woman who was questioning men about their position within the home and society, asking them to consider their own masculinity and masculine identity. Since the interview situation serves as:

An opportunity to signify masculinity inasmuch as men can portray themselves as powerful, in control, autonomous, and rational. It is a threat inasmuch as an interviewer controls the interaction, asks questions that put these elements of manly self-portrayal into doubt, and does not simply affirm a man's masculinity displays (Schwalbe, & Wolkomir, 2001: 91).

Moreover, taking part in an interview irrespective of the nature of it is to relinquish some control and place the masculine self at risk (Schwalbe, & Wolkomir, 2001). In reflection of this, Pini (2005) advises that we shift the focus from 'who is asking whom?' to 'who is asking whom about what?', because the research environment also shapes the interview relationship (Pini, 2005: 204). Schwalbe, & Wolkomir (2001) further comment that 'questions calling for answers that put control, autonomy, or rationality into doubt, if only implicitly, may be experienced as threatening. The threat may be heightened if it seems that the interviewer is interested in gender since this increases the salience of the participant's identity as a man' (Schwalbe, & Wolkomir, 2001: 91). What was evident in my interviews particularly with some older male participants was their manner of talking to me as I was a naïve young woman who had yet to learn about Islam. In four interviews all with Pakistani males Anwar (63), Pervaiz (65), Zubair (61), Hanif (55), they positioned themselves as the teacher/father. Similar to Pini's (2005) male subjects, these men would use non-verbal cues to indicate disapproval at my questions, or would use a tone to indicate the obviousness of my line of enquiry (cf. Pini, 2005). For instance, all 4 men adopted a teacher/student approach to the interview. I felt in their tone and response to some of the questions that they were educating me about the issues I was raising. Zubair and Pervaiz asked if I was married to which I replied that I was single, this way they were able to position themselves as elders who had more practical experience of being married, having children and so forth. In Muslim 'communities' due to the high level of segregation between the sexes, the difference between male and female

researchers is more prominent. This segregation was evident in some of my interviews with men there was an 'invisible barrier due to a strong *idea* of segregation'. Thus male researchers have less access to Muslim female spheres than have female researchers to Muslim male spheres' (Roald, 2001: 76).

#### 2.6.4 GENDER CONGRUENCE

As a child of migrant parents, I was someone who had a similar upbringing and experience. Many of the female participants spoke to me as I was 'one of them' (British, Pakistani, Muslim, wore the *hijab* and heterosexual) this was subtly evident in the interviews. Many would often ask me out of curiosity what my views on some topics were, for example, what I believed to be masculine and my views on homosexual Muslims. My gender also affected my role as a researcher. Indeed, this is often cited as one of the reasons, which affects access, gathering and analysis of information (Fortier, 1998). I was able to establish a good rapport with most of the female participants and many of them assumed that I understood what they were saying by virtue of my gender.

#### 2.6.5 ETHNIC CONGRUENCE

My identity as a Muslim, female researcher, of a Pakistani ethnic background far from being a hindrance was a benefit. In terms of ethnicity, because a substantial proportion of the sample were from a Pakistani background, I was able to understand, interpret and communicate with my participants in an effective manner because I was familiar with the language that many participants spoke. In an instance of ethnic congruence, my participants would occasionally speak in Urdu and/or Arabic when they wished to express the real meaning of something. Indeed, participants did not feel the need to translate (with the exception of a few longer sentences in Arabic). Moreover, as a non-Anglo person, participants openly talked about Anglo-Britons. For example, when they said negative things about 'White people' they were sometimes disparaging. Participants (often those brought up in Scotland) would freely use the term '*paki*' or '*goray*' (White person) because they saw me as belonging to their 'community' - Muslim and Pakistani. When they said negative things about '*goray*' or homosexuals, they seemed to feel safe discussing sensitive topics, such as homosexuality, and/or homophobia. I was seen as an 'insider' who would seemingly understand their stories and beliefs.

Therefore, I felt I could share much of what participants told me, however, this posed problems with analysing the data. In particular, on issues relating to religion, views on

religious practice and dress were similar to my own and this made the data seem unimportant. In comparison to non-practising Muslim participants who were not, as expressive about their Muslim identity this was very different to how I viewed religion and religious practice. Nevertheless, by acknowledging these issues I was aware that at times I needed to take a step back in order to 'objectively' analyse and discuss the data. Yet, I was also aware of the possibility that as an 'insider' I may neglect some information because, the 'inside' researcher is aware of the participants perspective and as a result may fail to ask the participant to follow-up questions. However, by using Patton's (2001) concept of 'empathic neutrality' I felt I was able to maintain a critical distance between the participant and myself. Empathic neutrality 'suggests a middle ground between becoming too involved, which can cloud judgment, and remaining too distant, which can reduce understanding' (Patton, 2001: 50). Roald (2001) in the following quotation describes how as a Muslim researcher she grappled with the issue of being an 'insider':

As an 'insider' I acquired knowledge which would perhaps never have been accessible to a non-Muslim researcher. Moreover, as an insider I have the same interest as other 'insiders', and my quest for knowledge often coincides with that of the research objects. I thus believe that the Muslim researcher obtains in studies on Muslims is different from the knowledge a non-Muslim might obtain due to different approaches and due to the different in 'cultural language'. I would also suggest, however, that differences in acquired knowledge and perceptions do not always have to do with being a Muslim or a non-Muslim. Although I can, as a Muslim, be regarded as an 'insider', but rather someone 'in between' (Roald, 2001: 70).

There were many instances when the participant would say 'you know as well as I do' or 'I'm sure you're well aware' when asked questions pertaining to Islam and/or in relation to Pakistani culture. With participants who were non-practising, my experience differed. It was I, who assumed their knowledge of Islam. The question 'do you ever refer to the *hadith*?', for example, was worded in a way that pre-judged the participants knowledge of what the *hadith* is, as for some, I had to explain. For example, with one participant I made the mistake of assuming that Islam was an important factor in his life: 'In what way is Islam important in your life?' The participant's response was: "never said it was". I realised how my assumption may have indicated to the participant the possible line of inquiry my research was focussing upon. This question was altered and re-worded as: 'Is Islam important in your life?' Again, in the questionnaire section on marital status I failed to include 'in a relationship' option. I recognised this only when one participant replied he was 'in a relationship', this was amended

and the option included. The above indicates some of the considerable challenges I faced in undertaking research within the Muslim 'community', my 'own' 'community'.

I experienced an identity crisis (cf. Roald, 2001: 71). I, like Roald (2001), often reflected and questioned whether I am 'first and foremost a Muslim or am I first and foremost a researcher?' For Roald, this tension, which I also experienced, is not necessarily because it stems from the way Islam has been studied in the 'West'. The decisive and critical attitude evident in some literature on Islam written by non-Muslims creates the idea that the scientific approach inevitably demands excessive criticism. Yet, this is not always evident in other subjects of scientific study. She attributes this discrepancy to the 'West's cultural heritage of Orientalism' (Roald, 2001: 71). Roald's words assured me and when instances of conflict arose they served as a useful springboard for understanding my motives for acting as I do and conversely for highlighting areas for improvement.

#### 2.6.6 OUTSIDER STATUS

In my interviews with homosexual males, I realised that my lack of experience could be to my advantage as it was a useful way to ask questions. In this case being an 'outsider' was helpful in gleaning data. While it was intriguing to learn about the lives of homosexual Muslims and their journey towards self-acceptance, their views on sexuality were very different from my own. As a result, I felt a strong sense of being an outsider when interviewing them on the issue of homosexuality, same-sex relationships, parenting, marriage and religion. At first I was unsure about how to 'act' in the interviews, I indicated my position as an outsider in an attempt to understand their position. So, for example when they told me that they could be married and live like heterosexual married Muslims, I would listen to their explanation and then say something like: 'I want to understand what you are saying, but the way I was raised as a (heterosexual) Muslim (like many others) there was no room for non-heterosexual relationships. How would you respond to that?' By making such a comment, I was able to show them that while my experience/knowledge was different, I wanted to understand how they live their lives as Muslim homosexuals and how they re-work the traditional meanings to situate themselves.

#### 2.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were a number of limitations impinging on my study. Measuring religiosity was a contentious issue not only during the interviews but also in trying to recruit participants. I was

apprehensive about asking whether participants were practising or non-practising. Indeed, one of my acquaintances explained that people reacted defensively to this question. During the interviews many would ask me to define what I considered to be a non-practising/practising Muslim, thus the categorisation was precarious. A problem with some other participants was language: many potential participants were Arabs and since I spoke no Arabic this ruled out a significant number of Muslims living in Glasgow. Moreover, despite conducting two interviews in Urdu, I found it difficult to translate and transcribe the interviews in English. Another limitation of this study is that 57% of the sample is of a Pakistani origin. Although attempts were made to be more wide-ranging this appeared to be a considerably difficult goal to achieve. Yet, the significant number of Pakistani Muslims in my sample is in keeping with the Muslim population of Glasgow. Pakistanis are the largest minority ethnic group in Scotland, comprising of 31.27% of the total number of ethnic minorities in Scotland<sup>10</sup>.

My gender was also an obstacle in recruiting potential participants. Although many women I contacted were willing to participate, they stated that their husband's would not talk to a female interviewer. According to Roald (2001), this is an exceptional obstacle in research involving Muslims. Male and female researchers are treated differently according to their sex because segregation between the sexes in Muslim communities is salient and, therefore, the difference between male and female researchers is more prominent than in other groups. Moreover, Roald (2001) suggests that the segregation is often invisible:

Even when men and women are present in the same room there will be an invisible barrier due to a strong idea of segregation inhibiting interaction between the sexes. The result is that men and women have access to different information. Male researchers have less access to Muslim female spheres than have female researchers to Muslim male spheres. A female researcher who wants to interview a male Muslim might find difficulties in communication due to invisible barriers (Roald, 2001: 76).

Indeed, as a female researcher I felt that establishing a rapport with male participants difficult because of an 'invisible barrier' (Roald, 2001). Indeed, in two interviews the male participants wives were present while they were being interviewed (despite my request that the interviews be conducted separately). Nevertheless, in both situations they left the room after approximately 10 minutes, comfortable with the contents of the interview questions. I considered the impact that I, a young female Muslim would have on the research and the

---

<sup>10</sup>. Source: Analysis of Ethnicity in the 2001 Census - Summary Report <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/socle/aescr-02.asp>.

participants' responses. In addition, as I had anticipated the fact I wear the *hijab* would for some 'signal' a sense of the religiosity of the researcher. It was precisely because of my identity as a Muslim and female that I was allowed entry (religious circles and centres<sup>11</sup>) and was able to legitimise my presence. I had a different experience with men as in three interviews (Tahir, Male 40 & Hanif, Male 55) there was an apparent reluctance to respond. With Hanif, as the interview progressed he felt more comfortable in expressing his views. Tahir's interview was the shortest from the entire sample, it was conducted in the cafeteria of his workplace during the mid-morning break and the background noise made it especially difficult for me to maintain a flow. In addition, Tahir's responses to questions were succinct with many answered in one-word responses. His attitude to the interview also shifted from being flippant to time conscious ('it won't take long will it?'). As a result, I felt conscious about taking too much of his time. The following excerpt illustrates his attitude:

Interviewer: What does being a Muslim mean to you?

Participant: Well it doesn't because I'm not really a practising Muslim.

Interviewer: Do you identify yourself as a Muslim?

Participant: No. End of interview!

Interviewer: If you don't wish to continue the interview then we can stop?

Participant: No, no I'm just giving you straight answers.

Interviewer: What does masculinity mean to you?

Participant: It means nothing! Masculinity just means you've got the organs of a man that's it. What else can it mean for me?

Pini (2005) examined the masculinities of male leaders of an Australian agricultural organisation and argues that in order to understand interviewing and gender and when gender is central to the research it is essential to question 'who, whom, what and where' (Pini, 2005: 202). Male interviewees in her study displayed masculinity in a number of ways, by emphasising their heterosexuality presenting themselves as busy and influential as possessing expert knowledge. Tahir was performing masculinity by positioning himself to be busy and making sure that I was aware of this (cf. Pini, 2005). With women rapport developed more easily with some more than others. Yet, there were three interviews (Rabia, Female 25; Fatima, Female 43; Naheed, Female 43) that were difficult because communication proved to be an obstacle as English was not their first language. As a result, they had trouble expressing themselves in English.

---

<sup>11</sup> This does not imply that if I were a non-Muslim I would not have been able to attend these circles/centres, but rather I was perceived to be 'one of them'

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

I have described the various methods employed in the selection of and search for participants, the research procedure and categorising of data. I have also demonstrated how my subjective position informed and influenced the research process as a whole. Above all, I was careful and conscious of Krieger's (1996) admonition 'that efforts to avoid the role of the self are, essentially, a form of self-deception' (Krieger, 1996: 178). My identity as a Muslim female has been instrumental in the research process. The difficulty I encountered during and after data collection was assuaged as I came 'to terms with a specific approach and tried to offer alternative methodologies in this particular area' (Roald, 2001: 71). Despite this, I have made a conscious attempt to transcend the limitations that may have ensued from positioning the subjective with the objective. I have also relayed how the study was bound by constraints such as participant availability/interest, language and gender (though, where appropriate every measure was taken to minimise such constraints). In the next chapter I examine and detail the beliefs of Islam, how my participants practice the tenets of Islam and the degree of practice.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ISLAM AS RELIGION, BELIEF AND PRACTICE

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Although there is an explicit underlying belief in an orthodox Islam I am aware that 'there are as many Islams as there are situations that sustain it' (Al-Azmeh, 1993: 1). Bouhdiba (1985) argues that despite the transnational Islamic 'community' regarding itself as unified, Islam is essentially 'plastic' in the sense that there are different Islams - Tunisian, Iranian, Yemeni, Afghan, Indian, Turkish, Sudanese and so on. In this chapter, I consider and describe the basis of Islam and Islamic doctrine and the degree to which participants implement and practice Islam in the way they lead their life. I also discuss how Muslims in diaspora in the 'West' experience and practice Islam. In the latter part of this chapter, I examine and discuss the empirical data from the questionnaire and the responses from the interview. I discuss the importance of Islam for homosexuals in detail in chapter Ten (Section 10.4).

#### 3.2 TERMINOLOGY

It is important to discuss the terminology I will make reference to. The terms 'West' and 'Western' are often used in contrast with the term 'non-Western'. Implied in this contrast is the idea that the 'West' is modern and progressive whereas 'non-Western' countries and cultures are not. However, I do not use the term to refer to the cultural, social or political superiority of the 'West' to the 'East'. Rather I use the term 'West' to refer to North America and Western Europe, more specifically I use the term 'West' and 'Western' in comparison to South Asian, Islam, in preference to British and Scottish (Shaw, 2000). Therefore, I use the term as a tool for comparative analysis. The term 'Islamic' has been used in multiple ways, from practices and beliefs to institutions. I restrict the term 'Islam' to refer to the text of the Qur'an and *hadith*. Where appropriate I make references to the way scholars use the term Islam. Islam is also used and invoked in different ways by both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. For instance, people can make references to 'what Islam says', yet what this precise 'Islam' *is* varies in understanding and meaning. Indeed, this illustrates the multiple Muslims experience and view Islam. Thus, when discussing and researching the issue of gender, sexuality and Islam, we need to be aware of the various understandings people may have of the term 'Islam'. While traditionalists like Maududi (1972) use 'Islam' generically to refer to the Qur'an, *hadith* and *Shari'ah*, modern Islamic feminists like Wadud (1999) refer to Islam solely to relate to the Qur'an. Therefore, what scholars and lay Muslims mean by Islam differs



according to their own understanding of the term. Yet, Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, as well as lay Muslims continue to use the term as if were a unitary concept.

Although the term 'Muslim' refers to a believer in or follower of Islam, there is a further distinction that one can make, which is whether one is a practising or non practising Muslim. I asked participants how they perceived themselves according to this classification. Scottish Muslims should not be perceived as an undiversified social group. One should not ignore the heterogeneity of Muslims in Britain and indeed throughout the world. Given Islam's wide geographical spread it is not surprising that Muslim 'communities' locally and globally are not static or the same (Imam, 2000). Indeed, we can point to various differences amongst Muslims: the Islam practiced in North Africa is not the same Islam practiced in Pakistan which differs from the Islam practiced by Muslims in Britain. There are various examples which demonstrate that there are many 'Islam's', and thus many 'Islamic practices', such as female circumcision, non-entry of women in mosques, worship of shrines, cults and so on.

### 3.3 ISLAM

Islam originated in seventh century Arabia and is based on the divine revelations received by Prophet Muhammad from the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel in the Bible). It is regarded by Muslims to be the final message from Allah and Prophet Muhammad is considered to be the final Messenger of Allah. The Prophet intermittently received revelations intermittently (from Angel Jibreel over a period of 22 to 23 years). The message/revelation was maintained orally but during the reign of the third *Khalif*<sup>1</sup> Uthman, they were collected and compiled into one volume which forms the Qur'an. The teachings of Islam are primarily based on the Qur'an (recitation) which has 114 chapters called *suwar* (sing. *surah*). Emanating from Qur'anic guidance is the *Shari'ah* which provides Muslims 'with a list of dos and don'ts' (Murata, 1992: 3). The *Sunnah* (traditions and practices of the Prophet) is a secondary and supplementary source of religious authority. This view is supported by the following verse in Qur'an<sup>2</sup>: 'O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger' (Qur'an 4:59). Indeed, both are inseparable: the *Sunnah* elucidates the Qur'an and implements its teachings and methodology. It is an 'all-rounded embodiment of the Qur'an's methodology'

---

<sup>1</sup> The term *Khalif* means 'to succeed', and a *Khalifa* is the 'Successor of the Prophet'. More specifically it refers to the four *Khulafa* (pl.) or 'the rightly-guided Khuifafa': who were: Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Uthman Ibn Affan and Ali Ibn Abu Talib. These men were succeeded the Prophet after his death at different periods.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'an, 9:33; 33:21; Qur'an, 47:33.

(al'Alwani & Khalil, 1991: 29). The *Sunnah* of the Prophet is recorded in *hadith*. These reports or traditions were maintained and communicated in verbal and written form. The collection of *hadith* literature indicates the broad scope of Prophet Muhammad's example; he is the model religious-political leader as well as the ideal husband and father. Traditions of the Prophet present guidance for personal hygiene, eating, dress marriage, treatment of wives, peacocking, and warfare (Esposito, 1991). Yet, a distinction is made between guidance originating from the *hadith* and that from the Qur'an (Beckerlegge, 2001). The Qur'an is the word of Allah, the *hadith* is not.

The *hadith* serves as a supplementary and secondary source of Islamic religious law along with the Qur'an (Doi, 1998). After Prophet Muhammad's death, his sayings and doings began circulating amongst Muslims and were further collected from the Prophet's companions. Each *hadith* describing a saying from the Prophet is prefaced by *Isnād* or chain of transmitters relating back to the person/companion of the Prophet who had witnessed/heard the statement/event. The *hadith* literature went through strict analysis by *hadith* compilers in the ninth century. There are 3 categories of *hadith*: the *sahih*: genuine Traditions acknowledged after applying all tests; the *hasan*: fair Traditions but less in matters of authenticity; and *Sahih Daif*: weak Traditions which are not reliable. The *ahadith* were admitted or refused according to two criteria: the text/content (*matn*) of the *hadith* and the chain of narrators (*Isnād*) (Roald, 2001). Traditions were recorded according to their subject and the subject matter was arranged under the headings of law books. Gradually six such collections which were made in the latter part of the third century of Islam succeeded in gaining such general approval that latter generations tacitly accepted them as the six canonical collections. They are *Sahih Bukhari* (d. 870); *Sahih Muslim* (d. 875) *Sunan Abi Da'ud* (d. 888); *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (d. 892); *Sunan al-Nasa'i* (d. 915) and *Sunan Ibn Maja* (d. 886). However, it is important to note that although my participants stated that they referred to the *hadith* no participant indicated an inclination to follow one particular *hadith* collection over another.

Islamic doctrine is also based on *ijtihad* (individual reasoning) and *ijma'* (consensus). The principle of *ijtihad* (interpretation) means exercising personal judgment based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in seeking solutions to religious problems. However, more importance is placed on *qiyas* (analogical reasoning). *Qiyas* involves reasoning by analogy: by seeking a similar situation in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, scholars are able to identify a common cause between the original and new example. While the doctrine of *ijma'* means consensus or the

consensus of the *Ulamā*<sup>3</sup>, which subdues individual and regional differences of opinion, allowing for a standardised legal theory and practice. Accepted interpretations of the Qur'an and the actual content of the *Sunnah* essentially rest on the *ijmā*. Although these are instrumental aspects of understanding the Qur'an and *hadith* my participants did not make references to *ijtihād* as a way of understanding Islam in their life. Underlying the teachings of Islam is the idea of an omnipotent and omnipresent God, Allah. Humankind has been created to worship Allah indeed, the term 'Islam' literally means submission and obedience, to submit to Allah's commands and to put Allah's commands into practice (Sarwar, 2000). All individual action will consequently be judged on the Day of Judgement: those who abide by Allah's rules will receive the reward of Paradise those who fail will be sent to Hell. Religious teachings inform Muslims of the purpose of their creation, their 'final destiny', how they should behave in public and private affairs and involves not only their spiritual and moral activities but also their social, economic and political ones (Sarwar, 2000). All aspects of social life revolve around and are governed by the *Shari'ah* (the authoritative basis of which is derived from the Qur'an, *hadith*, *ijmā* and *ijtihād*). Religious practice is not only confined to prayer and other acts of religious ritual but also in the individual conduct of each and every person. Therefore, 'faith (*Iman*) and right action or practice are intertwined' (Esposito, 1991: 69).

The 'Five Pillars of Islam' form the foundation of Muslim life and Islamic ritual practice. The first is the declaration of *Iman* (faith) called the *Shahadah*, a pronouncement that 'there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'<sup>4</sup>. Second is the *Salah* (prayer) the obligatory prayers to be performed five times a day, at dawn (*Fajr*), noon (*Zuhur*), mid-afternoon (*Asr*), sunset (*Maghrib*) and nightfall (*Isha*). Before proceeding to pray, Muslims must perform *Wudu* (ablution) in order to purify themselves for the prayer. Prayers may be said individually or as part of a congregation usually held in the mosque and led by the *Imam*<sup>5</sup> who has knowledge of the Qur'an. On *Jum'a* (Friday), Muslims gather together in the Mosque to hear the *Khutba* (sermon) and to do the *Jum'a Salah* (Friday prayer's) instead of *Zuhur*. The prayers consist of fixed sets of standings, bowings, prostrations and sitting in worship to Allah and are performed facing in the direction of Makkah<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Muslim scholars.

<sup>4</sup> *La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasullallah* (The Pure Word). This is the *Kalima al-tayyibah* or the *Kalima Shahada*.

<sup>5</sup> A person [male] who leads the prayer.

<sup>6</sup> The first Holy City of Islam in Saudi Arabia.

The third pillar is *Zakah*. The word *Zakah* means to purify or cleanse; it is the obligatory welfare tax/contribution and must be paid once a year, every year, at a rate of two and a half percent. By paying the *Zakah* the Muslim is performing an act of *Ibadāt* (worship) and purifies his/her wealth<sup>7</sup>. In contrast, charity comes in the form of *Sadaqa* which is a 'voluntary charity' (given for the pleasure of Allah). *Sawm* (fasting) is the fourth pillar of Islam. During the month of *Ramadan*<sup>8</sup> all Muslims have been ordered by Allah (Qur'an, 2: 183-185) to fast from dawn till dusk (refraining from food, drink and sexual relations). The elderly, sick and women who are menstruating, pregnant or nursing are exempt from fasting. However, they are asked to make up for the missing days and fast when they are able and healthy. A three-day religious festival (*Eid Al-Fitr*), marking the end of *Ramadan* takes place on the 10th month of the Islamic calendar. The *Hajj* pilgrimage to Makkah and Medina<sup>9</sup> is the fifth and final pillar of Islam. It is obligatory for all Muslim who are financially able and physically capable to make the pilgrimage to Makkah and Medina at least once in their lifetime. The close of the *Hajj* is marked by *Eid al Adha* ('the feast of the sacrifice'), which celebrates Prophet Ibrahim's obedience to Allah by willing to sacrifice his only son Ismail (Qur'an 37: 100-108).

### 3.4 THEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS

Although the general tenets outlined above apply to all Muslims, differences and factions exist amongst Muslims and within Islam. The principal theological division is between *Sunni* and *Shia* Muslims. The former constitutes the vast majority of Muslims in the world (85%), while the latter make up about 15% of the world's Muslim population (Esposito, 1998). In my heterosexual sample, 96% (65) of the participants were *Sunni* Muslims, with only 4% (3) *Shia*. As *Sunni* scholars developed a number of ways to interpret the *Shari'ah* their differing opinions created four schools of thought/law: *Maliki*, *Shafi'i*, *Hanbali*, and *Hanafi*. Although each school has its own distinguishing characteristics they acknowledge the others' right to their differing views (Kurtz, 1995). Although the majority of Glasgow's Muslim population are *Sunni*, Glasgow also has an *Ahmadiyya*<sup>10</sup> and *Shia* mosque (both in the West End of the city). There are also different theological positions within most mosques in Britain according to whether one is *Deoband*, *Barelwi* or *Wahabi*. Modood (1990) comments that most Pakistanis in Britain are *Barelwis*, while the remaining are *Deobandis*. Both originated from the reformist

<sup>7</sup> 'Of their goods, take alms, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them' (Qur'an, 9:103).

<sup>8</sup> The Ninth month of the Islamic calendar.

<sup>9</sup> The second Holy City of Islam in Saudi Arabia. The third is Jerusalem (Israel).

<sup>10</sup> *Ahmadiyya* are followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (who they consider to be the promised Messiah). They are regarded as a heretical movement by most mainstream Muslims, principally because they do not consider Prophet Muhammad to be the last Prophet but believe in a continuing Prophet hood after the death of Prophet Muhammad. Saudi Arabia forbids their entry into Medina and Makkah to do *Hajj* and *Umrah*.

movement in post-1857 British India (a specifically South Asian ideology). The *Deobandi's* stress the importance of education and continue to encourage Muslims to work towards a deep understanding of the doctrines of Islam (Modood, 1990) by placing greater responsibility on the individual, literacy and education and scripturalism. *Barelwis*, in contrast are intensely devoted to Prophet Muhammad, they also revere saints and holy men who they believe possesses the power to mediate between Allah and believers. Taken from the founder's name Abd Al Wahhab, *Wahabism* is a *Sunni* fundamentalist Islamic movement emerged and continues to be dominant in Saudi Arabia. The movement calls for a strict adherence to the Qur'an, hadith and oneness of Allah, It rejects ancient interpretations of Islam and jurisprudence.

In my conversation with the mosque representatives in Glasgow, I asked whether the mosque was affiliated with *Deoband*, *Wahabi* or *Barelwi* movement. From the 10 mosques, 4 said that they were *Deoband*, 3 said they were *Barelwi* (all in the Southside of the city); and 3 stated that they were 'Muslims' and that they were not affiliated with or belonged to any specific sect. The representatives were also asked whether the congregation who attended were *Deoband*, *Wahabi* or *Barelwi*, all stated that Muslims were welcome and it was a mix congregation. During the pilot interviews and with a few randomly selected participants (10 in total), I asked if participants were aware of the differences between *Deoband* or *Barelwi* or if they were affiliated with either one. The overwhelming response was one of bemusement. They were unable to respond to my questions because they were either unaware or unsure about what the terms means. Thus, while I recognise that these theological differences exist, I did not examine this in detail with my participants because from the 10 people that I spoke with were not aware of the definition or distinction. The principle difference between the *Barelwi* and *Deoband's* is the latter's promotion of individual understanding of Islam through education. While the former lay greater emphasis on the important of saints and devotion to Prophet Muhammad. Nevertheless, some of female participants who were learning about their religion and emphasising the importance of individual education were indeed reflecting the doctrines of the *Deoband* movement.

### 3.5 FOUR SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

*Madhhab* (school of religious jurisprudence *fiqh*) is a method used by scholars to analyse the principles and procedures of inquiry to develop religious rulings. The roots of their methods are the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Since each *madhhab* has its own methods they

arrive at somewhat different rulings. However, this does not mean that they represent different sects in Islam. It is important to mention that there are four schools of jurisprudence in Islam that put forward varying interpretations of *Shari'ah*. The difference lies in the credence that each gives to *hadith*. The four schools are named after the founders: *Hanafi*, (Abu Hanifa) is the oldest of the four schools and followed by people in South Asia and in some parts of the Middle East; *Maliki* (Malik Ibn Anas) is prevalent in North and West Africa; *Shafi* (Muhammad Shafi'i) followed by Muslims in North Africa and Malaysia; and *Hanbali* (Ahmad Hanbal) followed by Muslims in Saudi Arabia as well other Middle Eastern countries. The *Maliki* and the *Hanbali* law schools depend more on *hadith* compared to the *Hanafi* law school (Roald, 2001: 105). For the *Hanafi's* alongside the Qur'an and the *Sunna*, there is *ra'i*, which are 'decisions based on one's individual judgement' (Roald, 2001: 105). Indeed, Hanbal was a strong follower of the Prophet's Traditions and his main principle was to apply the *Sunna* of the Prophet as an explanation of the Qur'an (Roald, 2001: 105). *Shafi'i* school of thought unites the different school trends in a common source-of-law doctrine, *usul al fiqh*. *Shafi'i* thus involves 'ranking and harmonizing of the sources of law, side by side with emphasizing the use of analogy, qiyas, and consensus, *ijma*, as techniques of interpretation' (Dahl, 1997: 13). Imam (2000) points out that the existence of different schools of thought and *Shari'ah* affirm that there are different understandings about the way Islam should be practiced.

The *Hanafi*, *Hanbali*, *Maliki* and *Sha'afi* schools of *Sunni Shari'ah* as well as the *Shi'a* school provide differing understanding of Islamic legal opinion. Again, this was not an issue I explored with my participants. I had initially included a question on the topic (which school of thought do you follow?), yet, although some practising Muslims were aware of the four schools of law, they were unable to discern the difference or discuss in detail what these differences were. While my non-practising Muslim participants were all unaware about the four schools of law. Furthermore, some participants stated that they did not affiliate themselves with any one of the four schools of law. Although Muslims do not constitute one homogenous religious group (we must not ignore that there are now numerous sects of 'Islam' each equipped with their own varying interpretations of the Qur'an), the concept of *Ummah* (Muslim 'community') reflects and stresses the ideology of one distinct and integrated 'community'. Indeed, the Qur'an condemns the creation of factions amongst Muslims<sup>11</sup>. The *Sunnah* remains an important source for Muslims to imitate and emulate the behaviour and actions of the Prophet. For participants in this research, Islam provides an integrated set of beliefs and comprehensive

---

<sup>11</sup> (Qur'an, 6: 159).

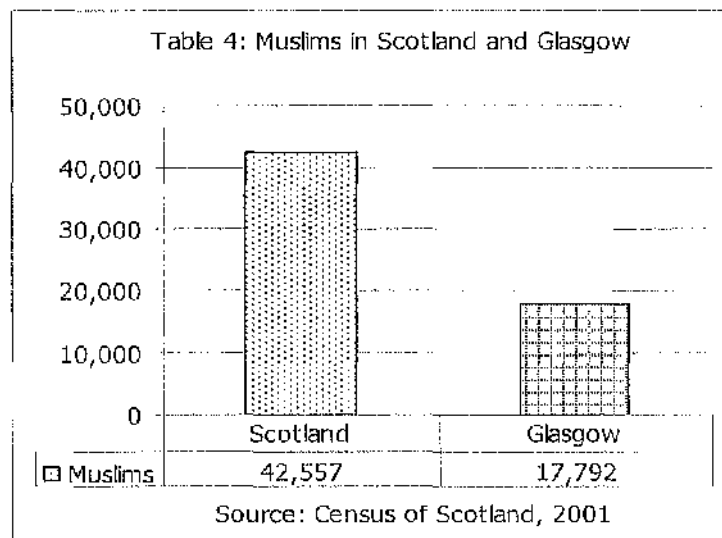
guide to life. Thus, 'even if Revelation is situated here and now, the content is perceived as an eternal and extra-temporal message. It lays down the model that God has chosen for his community; and this divine choice cannot undergo change' (Bouhdiba, 1998: 2). However, although my participants did not explicitly claim to follow a particular school of thought, from some of their comments it was possible to see a specific reflection of a particular school of law. In the next chapter, I examine the position of Muslims in Britain and the migratory experience of Pakistanis the largest ethnic group of Muslims in Britain. I also examine their social and economic position.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN

#### 4.1 BRITISH MUSLIM POPULATION

In the 2001 British Census there was a question on religious affiliation for the very first time. This provided statistical data on the Muslim population in the UK and revealed Muslims as the largest religious group after Christians. It is estimated that the Muslim population in the United Kingdom is around 1.6 million, constituting around three per cent of the total population<sup>1</sup>. In Scotland, the figure is around 42,557 (0.84% of the total population)<sup>2</sup> as we can see from Table 4 below Glasgow has the highest proportion of Muslim people of any local authority area in Scotland: 42% (17,792) of Muslims reside in Glasgow, accounting for 3.1% of Glasgow population.



In Glasgow, the five areas with the highest number of Muslims are on the Southside (Pollokshaws; Langside; Mount Florida; Cathcart; and Newlands). This area comprises of over half (56%) of the city's Muslims, with a smaller number living in the 'Kelvin-Woodlands' area<sup>3</sup>. A significant number of Muslims (85%) in Glasgow describe their background as either 'Indian' or 'Pakistani/Other South Asian'<sup>4</sup> and Pollokshields is the ward with the highest number of

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/focuson/religion>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00398-02.asp>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/08142443/24477>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/08142443/24484>



Pakistanis (40%)<sup>5</sup>. In more recent years, large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees have arrived in Scotland. Currently there are around 6000 asylum seekers in Glasgow around half of whom are from Muslim countries<sup>6</sup>. Along with Pakistani and Indian Muslims there are also Arab, African and Turkish Muslims. What this indicates is that Muslims in Glasgow are ethnically, regionally and racially diversified. This diversification can be seen across Britain.

Muslims in Britain therefore are not a homogenous 'community,' but are linguistically, culturally and racially diverse. Muslims in Britain are composed of various national and ethnic backgrounds, with a number from East Africa, the Far East and Arab countries (Nielsen, 1992). The largest group of British Muslims are predominantly South Asians (Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin) (Modood et al., 1997; Anwar, 1998). The ethnic composition of Muslims in Scotland similarly consists of 89.2% Pakistanis, 43.2% other South Asians and 18.5% African origin. Indeed, Pakistanis constitute the largest minority ethnic group in Scotland (31.27% of the total number of ethnic minorities in Scotland)<sup>7</sup>. In my sample, Pakistani (57%) and Indian (10%) participants constituted the largest ethnic groups. The diversity of British Muslims was also reflected in my sample composition: Iraqi (10%), British (6%), Egyptian (4%), Moroccan (4%), Kurd (3%), and other<sup>8</sup> (6%). Pakistanis arrived in Britain in large numbers during the post-war period to fill the gap in the industrial and service sector. In general, men arrived in Britain without their wives and children, with around 95% coming from rural parts of Pakistan and Bangladesh (Lewis, 1994). According to Shaw (2001), Muslims migrants in Glasgow are predominantly from Faisalabad (Pakistan) in the Punjab (cf. Werbner, 1990). There was a subsequent increase in immigration numbers due to the introduction of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act (1962) to curtail large-scale immigration, particularly from Commonwealth countries. This was a time when the wives and children of male migrants arrived in Britain to join them (Lewis, 1994). Another notable feature of British Muslim immigration was a pattern of chain migration. New migrants were often supported by earlier arrivals: brothers, cousins and other relatives arrived with pre-existing links in Britain, thus the formation of a 'community' was not difficult (Shaw, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> ethnicgroupdata 2001 Census analysis: [<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D714F361-0A75-41FC-B199-D7B/C2AA22B4/0/EthnicGroupData.pdf>]

<sup>6</sup> Total number in 2005: 5798. Asylum seekers from Muslim countries include: Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Kosovo, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan and Turkey. Source: COSLA Refugee & Asylum Seekers Consortium. [[http://www.asylumscotland.org.uk/media\\_stats\\_020105.php](http://www.asylumscotland.org.uk/media_stats_020105.php)]

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/aescr-02.asp>

<sup>8</sup> Somalian, Argentinean, Seychellois, Kuwaiti, Palestinian, Bosnian.

## 4.2 THE SATANIC VERSES

The racial and ethnic characterisation of Muslims in Britain has changed over the decades, according to Alexander (1998) the emergence of the Muslim 'community', has seen a

Series of re-creations of Asian identities in the post-war period. Starting life as coloured, reinvented in the 1960s and 1970s as politically black, rediscovered as Asian in the new racist/multi-culturalist 1980s, it is events of the late 1980s and early 1990s that have re-imagined Asian identities along religious-cultural lines' (Alexander, 1998: 440).

The latter was a reflection and reaction to Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. The publication of the novel created controversy throughout the Muslim world as it was regarded as containing blasphemous references against Prophet Muhammad. Muslims in Britain prior to the protest had been a politically inactive group. The book burnings in Bradford and the *fatwa*<sup>9</sup> issued by the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran calling for the death of Rushdie was the first time that Europeans were seeing immigrant Muslims in unity (Cesari, 2003). Demonstrations in Britain mobilised South Asian Muslims across the sectarian and organisational divide (Werbner, 2004). Yet, Modood (1992) believes that the 'emergence of Muslim sensibilities' over the *Satanic Verses* freed Muslims from the black/white dualism but at the same time obscured their religious and cultural identities. Moreover, the construction of the Muslim 'community' continues to create identities along a set of dualisms, black/white, Asian/black, Muslim/non-Muslim increasingly British/Muslim: at the same time including but also eradicating diversity (Modood, 1992, cited in Alexander, 1998). While the issue of a Muslim 'community' is one of great debate, to what extent can we talk of my participants being part of a greater Muslim 'community'?

## 4.3 MUSLIM 'COMMUNITY'

The use of the term 'community' to describe Muslims assumes an easily identifiable category of people. However, it is essential to highlight that the concept of 'community' is a term which is precarious because it has multiple and diverse meanings. Indeed, Hillary (1955) found 94 definitions of the term and concluded that the most common feature of the term was that it dealt with people, and the three most common factors were social interaction, sharing common ties and geographic area (Hillary, 1955: 111). Thus, we find in much academic literature that the term 'community' is inverted commas because of its many connotations and

---

<sup>9</sup> A legal declaration in Islam passed by a Muslim scholar. Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued a *fatwa* on the basis that the book was "blasphemous against Islam" and offered a reward for the death of Salman Rushdie.

definitions. It may be used to describe a group of people who share a set of beliefs and common history (Jewish 'community') or a collective of people who share a sense of difference (gay 'community') and so on, however, one must not ignore the many differences and divisions within the Muslim minority in Glasgow and in the rest of Britain. As Modood (2003) comments:

Muslims are not . . . a homogenous group. Some Muslims are devout but apolitical; some are political but do not see their politics as being 'Islamic' . . . Some identify more with a nationality of origin, such as Turkish; others with the nationality of settlement and perhaps citizenship, such as French. Some prioritise fundraising for mosques; others campaign against discrimination, unemployment or Zionism. . . The category 'Muslim' then, is as internally diverse as 'Christian', 'Belgian' or 'middle-class' or any other category helpful in ordering our understanding of contemporary Europe; but just as diversity does not lead to an abandonment of social concepts in general, so with that of 'Muslim'. (Modood, 2003: 100)

At the same time, Modood highlights how references to Muslims must recognise the diversity within the group and take into account the multiple 'Islams' which emerge from such an understanding. Werbner (1991) adds that a preoccupation with 'community' overshadows the differences within minority groups. Salih (2000) similarly remarks that labelling migrants as belonging to a 'community' homogenises the diversity of cultural experiences and subjectivities that migrants' exhibit. The picture presented by the presence of a Muslim 'community' is of an Islam based on a constant set of practices that Muslims as a 'community' follow and recreate (Salih, 2000). Werbner (1991) further comments that the existence of a so-called Muslim 'community' presumes elected leaders. This assumption was most evident during the Rushdie affair where the leaders of Bradford were conferred with by the media, creating the idea that they were representatives for the British Muslim 'community'. This was in spite of the fact that the Bradford representatives were not elected or approved leaders of the entire Muslim 'community' in the UK (Ahmed, 1993).

The presence of Muslims in Glasgow does not necessarily imply the presence of a Muslim 'community'. Similarly, the tendency of Muslims in Europe to cluster together in specific geographic areas (Ahmed, 1993) does not necessarily create a Muslim 'community'. Indeed, traditionally, Muslims have been separated from other Muslims through their membership in specific ethnic communities. Kinship networks sustain these divisions (Vertovec, 1998). Despite Glasgow being home to 42% of the Scottish Muslim population there is no particular

organised Muslim 'community' in Glasgow (Clegg & Rosie, 2005). Although we can employ the term 'community' to describe Muslims as a social group characterised by their faith, it might not be the most appropriate term to use when describing Muslims in Glasgow. Since by talking about a Muslim 'community' we become engrossed around 'religious difference rather than national/regional-cultural affiliations, which is made to stand for: the distinction is not Gujrati/Bangladeshi . . . but Muslim/non-Muslim (Alexander, 1998: 441). My sample, for instance, was composed of Muslims from countries as diverse as Seychelles, Argentina to Bosnia, each with their own cultural and social customs. Indeed, recent figures estimate that British Muslims include 56 different nationalities and speak around 70 languages (Q-News, 2004: 23). However, in spite of the problematic nature of conceiving of Muslims in Britain as forming a 'community' it is clear that this conception has political benefits for the White majority as well as for 'community' representatives who vie for access to resources. It is useful here to refer to a quotation from Shaw (2000) who examined the existence of a Pakistani 'community' in Oxford who notes that the term 'community' generally implies a homogenous group with a shared culture. She adds:

Oxford Pakistanis have many different identities. They are both British and Pakistani; they also have regional identities; *biradari* or caste identities; religious identities and may belong to more than one distinctive linguistic group . . . Yet, Pakistanis themselves use the English word community in a variety of context. They speak of the 'Muslim community', when discussing plans to build a mosque, and of the 'Pakistani community' in relation to other ethnic groups – the Indians, the Bangladeshis, the Afro-Caribbean's . . . they also use the word community to evoke their shared local history, to refer inclusively to Pakistanis who like themselves or their parents or grandparents came to Britain in the 1950s and the 1960s (Shaw, 2000: 10).

What the above quotation reveals is that Muslims like any other social group have multiple identities, with one (cultural) being shaped and influenced by the other (religious) and vice versa. Thus, Muslim identity as well as a Pakistani, Indian or Iraqi identity is shaped and divided by caste, region and ethnicity. The use of 'community' relies on these multiple factors. Moreover, the diverse mix of Muslims is reflected in different cultural traditions, social classes, histories and levels of assimilation and integration to British life. Ethnic divisions have been a common feature in British Muslim life since the 1960s and have in effect created multiple Muslim communities (cf. McLoughlin, 2005). One only has to take into account the differences emanating from mosques in Glasgow to demonstrate this.

#### 4.3.1 THE ROLE OF MOSQUES IN THE CREATION OF A MUSLIM 'COMMUNITY'

In Britain, in 1963, there were 13 mosques. The numbers is now estimated to be around 1000 (McLoughlin, 2005) or over 1,200 mosques (Q News, 2004: 23). As the Scottish Muslim population has increased mosques and Islamic centres have also grown in order to meet the needs of Muslims. In Glasgow there are around 14 mosques<sup>10</sup>. There is no central institutional clergy, that is, there is no organised representation for all Muslims so mosques can be a strong ethno-religious space. McLoughlin (2005) notes that 'mosques are the most numerous institutions that South Asian Muslim minorities have established in Britain since first arriving in large numbers during the 1950s and 1960s' (McLoughlin, 2005: 1045). Thus there is a particular South Asian influence on British Islam. Indeed, Werbner (2004) points out that:

A major feature of Islam in Britain is that on the whole it remains nationally and ethnically divided. Despite wishful talk of the emergence of a 'British Islam', even today there are Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Arab mosques, as well as Turkish and Shi'a mosques, and the language of sermons and even supplicatory prayers in the Pakistani mosques, whatever their tendency, is Urdu rather than Arabic' (Werbner, 2004: 904).

Further to racial and ethnic differences, mosques in Glasgow are also fragmented along theological divisions. In telephone conversations I had with 10 mosque representatives in Glasgow, I asked whether the Imam of the mosque was British or Pakistani. In 9 mosques there were Pakistani Imams who had either migrated from Pakistan or were British born Pakistanis. In the largest mosque in Glasgow (Central Mosque), there were three Imams one of whom was a British born Pakistani the other two were from Pakistan. The SUMSA (Strathclyde University Muslim Student Association) mosque however, had an Egyptian Imam. This supports D'Agostino's (2003) idea of 'import Imams', that is, religious leaders who have come to British cities from their native Muslim countries. These Imams have been taught and trained in Islamic theology in their native country. McLoughlin (2005) adds that many of the Imams of South Asian mosques in Britain are first-generation migrants who are not fluent in English and have difficulty in understanding British society. Moreover, the various mosques in Glasgow each represent different factions of the Muslim 'community'.

Pakistani Muslims have monopolised mosque space in Glasgow and culturally and religiously reproduced themselves through their mosques. Mosques in Glasgow are in the main managed

---

<sup>10</sup> In the South Side of the city: Masjid Noor, Madrassah Al-Farooq; Madrassah Taleem-ul-Islam; Madrassah Zia-ul-Quran; Madni Mosque, Langside; Masjid Khizra; Madrassah Al-Arabia al-Islamia; Masjid Jamia Islamia and Renfrew Mosque. In the West End, Muslim House; Masjid Al-Furqan; Masjid Dawat Ul Islam. In the City Centre: Glasgow Central Mosque and SUMSA Mosque.

and run by Pakistani Muslims, the congregation is largely made up of South Asian Muslims and so the sermons are in Urdu (although sometimes an English sermon follows). Yet, in areas where there is a diverse Muslim population, like the SUMSA mosque and the Al-Furqan mosque in the West End sermons are given in English to cater to non-Pakistani Muslims. Imams in some of the bigger mosques do conduct sermons in English but given the large number of Pakistanis, they are very often conducted in Urdu. The main mosques (like the Central Mosque) often make exclusive claims to orthodoxy but where numbers permit, there are smaller mosques that meet the needs of the different cultures and smaller groups (Vertovec, 1998). In reality, mosques have created divisions that restrict the construction of 'community'. For instance for the past few years mosques in Glasgow have been unable to determine the commencement of *Ramadan*<sup>11</sup>. As a result, in 2004 and 2005 there were two different days for *Eid ul-Fitr*, some Muslims celebrated *Eid* on a different day depending on the mosque they were affiliated with. This is not uncommon in other British cities as Sidiqi comments:

We should try to have Eid together with other Muslims as much as it is possible. It is certainly wrong to have two Eids in the same city. The problem with us Muslims in Europe and North America is that we do not have one official body that would make this decision for us. Every Islamic centre considers itself a country and makes its own decision<sup>12</sup>.

It is important to point out the class and social differences between the South Side of Glasgow and the West End. The latter is a prosperous and affluent area of the city, with a large University. The West End is a far more cosmopolitan area than the South Side, where there are less prosperous areas like Govan and Ibrox. Moreover, in the South Side, ethnic 'communities' are more likely to live amongst their own ethnic group.

#### 4.3.2 MUSLIM DIASPORA IN GLASGOW

Historically the term diaspora has been used to describe the forced expulsion of people out of their native land, for example, Jews, Palestinians, Africans, forced to live in exile against their will. In contemporary research, however, the term diaspora has been employed to understand migration, ethnic and cultural differences. Diaspora is often used simply to refer to a dispersion of people of a similar origin living in exile or to those who have crossed borders as migrants. The term has a number of meanings. Cohen (1997) highlights some common features of a diaspora which includes: (1) the dispersion of a people from their native

<sup>11</sup> The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar calendar. Muslims must view the new moon in order to determine when the month will begin.

<sup>12</sup> <http://moonsighting.com/eldsame.html>

homeland which may involve voluntary or forced migration to two or more regions; (2) a shared memory of an idealised homeland; (3) the desire to preserve strong ties to native country, through collective identity, cultural, beliefs and practices, language or religion; (4) a sense of solidarity and association to people of the same ethnic group from other settlements; and (5) a collective commitment to maintain and continue a ties with their homeland. It is not necessary to class ethnic groups according to each category distinguished by Cohen. That is, particular ethnic groups need not be categorised into specific types of diaspora. This is because different diasporas can be classed by various statuses: victim/refugee, imperial/colonial, labour/ service, trade/commerce (Cohen, 1997).

A number of participants from my sample fell into Cohen's categories of diaspora. Hameed, a 50-year-old male Kurd was the chairman of the Kurdish Cultural Association in Scotland and involved in homeland politics. The organisation he was involved in works to support compatriots in Iraq with economic aid, lobbying local and national governments to highlight the plight for Kurds and to fight for their rights in Iraq. Hameed's multiple identities expressed a cultural as well as religious distinctiveness with strong ties to his ethnic group. Thus, some Muslims like Hameed, identify in a way that is far from situated in a sense of social solidarity with other non-Kurdish Muslims in Glasgow. Similarly, Rahim (37) a Palestinian who has been living in Glasgow for 15 years, was a member of the Scottish Palestinian Solidarity Campaign in Glasgow. Another participant, Pervaiz, who had been living in Glasgow for 37 years, was the secretary of the Pakistani Media Relations Council in Glasgow. Sadia (Female, 36), Haroon (Male, 36), Bilal (Male, 28) and Humaira (Female, 29) were involved with ISB. These participants fall into Cohen's third, fourth and fifth category of diaspora, that is, while some work to maintain ties with their native country, others work to preserve a sense of solidarity and association to people of the same ethnic group, and continue ties with their homeland. While some were maintaining ties with their homeland, others expressed the desire to create them. Bilal (28, Morocco) and Humaira (29) stated that they would eventually like move to Morocco so that their child could be educated in Arabic. There was thus a collective commitment to create ties with Bilal's homeland.

Many of my other participants (South Asian immigrants) can be classed as labour diaspora who travelled for economic reasons but maintained a sense of ethnic identity in diaspora. Many participants, especially males, fell into this category since they were migrants who arrived in Britain to fill labour shortages. People like Anwar (Male, 63), who left his native homeland

over 40 years ago, continues to maintain strong links with his family and 'community' in Pakistan given that he had no extended or immediate family in Glasgow. He funded the education of his nieces and nephews and continued to send money to his family in Pakistan. Others like Rashid (Male, 35) and Kamran (Male, 29) both Pakistani migrants are financially maintaining their families in Pakistan. Diaspora also means a sense of solidarity and association to people of the same ethnic group. The conscious effort to maintain a Pakistani collective can also be seen through the support of Mohammed Sarwar. He is a Pakistani Muslim Scottish MP who relies largely on the support from a large proportion of the Pakistani 'community' (in particular Pollokshields).

Another important aspect of diaspora involves a commitment to maintain overseas ethnic group connections through an attachment with their homeland signifying the empathy and solidarity one has with one's homeland. By sending money they preserve ties with relatives in the homeland, particular when the home country is poor. Therefore, the idea of a Muslim 'community' presumes that Muslims speak with a unified mono-dimensional voice, yet, the above indicates otherwise. What was evident from my sample was that rather than constituting a unified Muslim 'community', they were part of a diaspora with some involved in the politics of their homeland; fighting for the rights of their compatriots. Thus, there was a real sense not of a 'community' but of a collective commitment to maintain and continue ties with their homeland, through, money, culture and politics. For some, there were greater degrees of rootedness to one's homeland, which in effect diminished a sense of 'community' with the Muslims in Glasgow. The existence of a Muslim 'community' cannot be forged on a single identity like being Muslim, especially given the heterogeneity of the Muslim population. This means that there are various influences on the identities of Muslims in Glasgow, which lies at the heart of the non-monolithic nature of Muslims. Even within a small population of Muslims, there is a wide diversity of expression of Muslim identity in Glasgow.

#### 4.3.3 MUSLIMS IN THE 'WEST'

Muslims in Europe are made up of a number of diverse national and ethnic groups from Turks, Algerians, Bangladeshis to Indians. There are approximately 23 million Muslim living in Europe (Küçükcan, 2004). In more recent years, Muslims and the emergence of a Muslim identity have been more visible and vocalised. There has also been an increase in Western-educated young Muslims pronouncing their Muslim identity in Western countries (Küçükcan, 2004). Muslims are adapting their way of thinking of themselves as believers not by altering Islam,



that is, there is a move towards embracing Islam in new localised settings (Roy, 2000). Indeed, in recent years there has been increasing talk of a Muslim 'community' in 'Western' Europe. There has been a break away from factionalism and weakening of traditional loyalties to cultural heritage. With a move towards a universal bond with Muslims around the world is being heralded by European Muslims. The articulation of a universal Muslim 'community' and Muslim identity is expressed through the concept of *Ummah*. The *Ummah* ties Muslims together around the world where membership is determined by faith and piety rather than ethnicity and geography. The emergence of what Cesari (2003) calls 'vernacular Islam' is a sign of change, that is, Islam is being articulated through sermons, literature and public discussions in the local European language. Cesari (2003) maintains that cultural and ethnic influences have weakened as non-first-generation Muslims begin to consider Islam more as an individual belief. The idea of *Ummah* extends beyond the self to solidarity with the worldwide Muslim 'community', especially in places of conflict. Yet, Roy (2000) points out that Muslim organisations and social movements in Europe are attached to ethnic and national ties from the country of origin. Therefore, the real change is individualisation and reconstruction of identities that challenge the core concept of 'one' Muslim 'community' in Europe. There is no 'Western' Islam, there are 'Western' Muslims (Roy, 2000).

What is evident is that many Muslims in diaspora are rediscovering Islam. This is seen in the emergence of *dars* all around Glasgow. The *dars* are Islamic lessons organised by and for women across Glasgow many of them in private homes, to read and understand the Qur'an. Through *dars* Muslim women are detracting the cultural elements of what they believed to be Islam to discover the meaning of the text of the Qur'an for the first time. Moreover, while it may be argued that mosques are the preserve of Pakistani Muslims, in centres like Al-Meezan in Pollokshields, (run mainly by Pakistanis), there is more inclusiveness: classes are taught in English, Urdu and Arabic, there are also classes for converts. Thus, what we are seeing in Glasgow is a gradual shift away from a centralised mosque. Moreover, this reduces the divisions, which mark out some mosques and their congregation as *Barelwi* or *Deoband*. Religion and the dissemination of religious knowledge has shifted into people's homes and to centres. It is no longer restricted to the mosque, which is the reserve of a particular type of Muslim (male and Pakistani). There has been an increase in Western-educated young Muslims pronouncing their Muslim identity in 'Western' countries (Küçükcan, 2004), yet, by extension this has also taken place with older Muslim women who, through a process of re-education are asserting their religious identity in favour of their cultural identity. Given that Muslims are a

diversified group, how do they practice Islam in their diaspora environment? I examine these issues by considering studies of Muslims in diaspora in the 'West'. By doing this we can see how the construct of a Muslim 'community' in Glasgow is a misconception.

#### 4.3.4 MUSLIM DIASPORA IN THE 'WEST'

Johnson's (2006) study of the Mandinga people from Guinea-Bissau and Portugal reveals how cultural and Muslim identities converge into one (being Mandinga is to be Muslim) in Guinea-Bissau. Yet, some Mandinga immigrants in Lisbon (Portugal), with the effects of transnationalism and the appeal of 'global Islam' question this connection. Johnson explores this issue with the 'writing-on-the-hand' ritual, which inducts Mandinga children into Qur'anic study. The ritual takes place in a Mandinga child's life only once, preferably at the age seven. The ritual involves a holy man using black ink from a fountain pen to write surah Al-Fatiha on the child's palm. He then adds a touch of salt to the ink and tells the child to lick it from his/her hand three times with their tongue. After the child consumes the word of Allah, the holy man tells the child to read each letter. Johnson (2006) comments that 'despite its unmistakably Islamic character, the writing-on-the-hand ritual is more of an 'African' ritual than a 'Muslim' one' (Johnson, 2006: 58). Yet, there are some Mandinga immigrants in Portugal who believe that this ritual is vital for their sense of 'Mandinga-ness' and their Muslim identity, thus they continue to practice the ritual in Portugal. In addition, as a consequent of the disillusionment and alienation Mandinga people sense from other Muslims, many tend to pray, celebrate Islamic holidays, and study the Qur'an in their own homes 'where they can practice Islam on their own terms'. They choose to teach their children in the home not by informal instruction but through the daily experience of being nurtured in a Mandinga household and other events in the local immigrant 'community'. Thus, rather than being a 'community' of Muslims, Madingas 'simply abandoned the dream of being cosmopolitan Muslims. They prefer instead to 'remember where they come from and to embrace their 'African-ness' (Johnson, 2006: 66).

The findings of Johnson's study relates to my sample in a number of ways. Race appears to be an issue as non-African Muslims did not consider Mandinga immigrants in Lisbon as Muslims but rather as 'blacks'. As a result, the Madingas felt a strong sense of estrangement and little or no sense of a *Ummah*. Rather, being a 'good Muslim' is measured by one's race, culture and ethnicity. In my sample, the experience of Zainab (Female, 20), although not as segregatory as the Madingas, is somewhat similar to the experiences of Madinga migrants in

Lisbon who felt excluded from other Muslims because they were black. Zainab a White Scottish convert since she was 15 was married to a Pakistani migrant. She spoke at length about being a 'White' Muslim in Glasgow. Like Johnson's subjects, she felt that her race played a part in the way she was perceived by other Muslims. Zainab was a practising Muslim, wore a *hijab*, was fluent in Punjabi and Urdu, wore traditional *salwar kameez*<sup>13</sup>, and for all intents and purpose would pass for a traditional Pakistani women. Yet, she felt that for some Pakistani Muslims in Glasgow to be a White Muslim was incompatible. She discussed a particular incident:

I was in an Asian shop and was looking at some of the items on a stall, and these two Pakistani women who were there started talking, and I heard them say in Urdu: "look at that *goree* in *salwar kameez*" and they started laughing, obviously they weren't aware that I could understand everything they were saying, but I didn't say anything I just ignored them'.

Zainab added that this was a common occurrence and felt disappointed that rather than being seen as a Muslim she was seen as a White woman, irrespective of her traditional Pakistani attire or *hijab*. Thus, just like the Madinga's, Zainab felt that her race was an issue as some Pakistani Muslims do not consider her as a Muslim but rather as a *goree* (White woman). Unfortunately, I was unable to explore issues relating to race and religion with other Muslim converts in my sample, because the remaining four were not practising Muslims, nor did they wear a *hijab*. Furthermore, Zainab did not discuss how White Scottish people had reacted to her dress. Johnson's informants also reported that the Central mosque in Lisbon was dominated by South Asian Muslims and Arabs who held positions of power. They stated that they were harassed and discriminated against in the mosque during religious holidays (*Eid*) and Friday prayers. They were restricted from entering the mosque and if they tried going in they were asked to prove their identity as Muslims before being allowed to enter. Thus, South Asian and Arab Muslims lay claim to the most esteemed religious space as their own. McLoughlin (2005) similarly found that in Britain male elders tend to do the same in many British mosques. Thus, although mosques are supposed to be open to all Muslims, in reality there are subtle and sometimes clear restrictions in place for some Muslims. As one of my participants Amr (39, Male), an Egyptian PhD student studying in Glasgow, found:

---

<sup>13</sup> The *salwar* is a type of loose trouser and the *kameez* a long shirt.

I've been to mosques in Glasgow and in the Friday prayers the sermon is in Urdu, so how can I and other Arabs understand what's being said? It's very Pakistani-oriented, there not open to others who are non-Pakistani'.

In this way, mosques continue to restrict integration between Muslims of different nationalities and races as was seen in Johnson's study and also in my sample. Like some of my female and male participants, Johnson found that there were Mandinga's who were embracing a global normative Islam because they believe that the ritual of 'writing-on-the-hand' should be abandoned in favour of an orthodox Islam. This transition towards a more global Islam has occurred for a number of reasons, firstly because more Mandinga's are able to make the pilgrimage to Makkah. Some of my participants, for example, stated that by making the pilgrimage to *Hajj* they had become more religious through practice (praying and changing their lifestyle) and dress (wearing the *hijab* and dressing modestly). Secondly, some Madinga's were seeking an Islamic education, again like some of my participants there was more of a heightened sense of being a Muslim, especially for some older as well as younger women. My participants, like some Madinga's were rethinking their previous understanding of what is characterised as 'proper' Muslim practice and belief and to detach 'Muslim' practices from Pakistani, Indian and African ones through understanding what the Qur'an says. Johnson's research indicates how life in diaspora for some Muslims serves as a reminder of how life as a Muslim should not be practiced.

Muslims in diaspora also express multiple Islam's as is evident in D'Agostino (2003) study of Muslims in New York where she explored how Muslims shape their understanding of religion through the translation and interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith*. In particular, she looked at the association between religious education and the way individuals are taught Islam. In addition, she examined how their education influences their idea of 'community' and sense of self. D'Agostino found that the diasporic connection is forged on a transnational identity associated with a common Islamic past and recognition of the individual's position in a global 'community' of believers (*Ummah*). The diversity of Muslims in New York is reflected in the various mosques: there are Bengali, Arab, Bosnian, Pakistani, African American, Senegalese and Albanian mosques. D'Agostino (2003) focussed on the educators, 'community' leaders, religious leaders, school teachers, and others who helped to create an understanding of who the 'community' is and what it is like. Given New York's diverse Muslim population, within educational spaces, interpretations differ depending on the teacher. As she points out, even a scholar's area of specialisation, the degree of their knowledge and training and the angle of

their interpretation differ. While, Glasgow does not have mosques of such varied diversity, D'Agostino's article reflects some similarities with the situation of Glasgow's Muslim population. In Glasgow, religious and 'community' leaders have largely been older, Pakistani males, who have been preaching and promoting 'their' traditional conservative version of Islam as *the* Islam. Moreover, these men tend to have been taught in Pakistan and have inculcated the values and ideals of their native homeland and try to impose their teachings to a diaspora audience.

The way individuals learn Islam is important because it affects how one understands their Muslim identity and how they situate themselves in the wider society. My participants reported that they either learnt the Qur'an from their mothers or from a woman who taught the Qur'an. In general, these women had not received training. Others were taught in the mosque. In all these situations, the main 'teaching' method was to get children to quote the Qur'an from memory. This aim of this method is simply learning the Qur'an through perfecting pronunciation, not on understanding the teachings of the Qur'an. Therefore, rather than learn Arabic, non-Arab speaking Muslims depend on English or Urdu translations. Therefore, because the Qur'an and *hadith* are translated from classical Arabic, many non-Arab speaking Muslims refer to religious text without having read the translations. In my sample, for instance, participants would refer to certain *hadith* reports, yet, they did not cite the source of the *hadith*, were uninformed about the authenticity of the *hadith*, and were unaware of the context within which the report had been reported. For instance, Uzma (Female, 33) referred to a '*hadith* that Eve was made out of a bent rib: 'in Islam there is *hadith* on men and why He [Allah] has made woman from a man's rib'. Yasir (Male, 37), similarly noted that: 'there is a very interesting Hadith that says that woman are not flexible like men, they are made out of a rib'. Yet, Hassan (1996) points out that this *hadith* finds its source not from the Qur'an but from the Bible. What this indicates is that there is a conduit of information that flows from the text to trained scholars through to lay Muslims, yet, there is an implicit acceptance of some issues especially those concerning women. Thus, the transmission of knowledge depends on the scholar's interpretation and Islamic education. However, it also depends on the oral education one gains from one's family and peers:

I was told that when you do your *wudu* you were only allowed to use stone cold water . . . my friend used to say that it had to be done this way. For a year or so I did this . . . I presumed that everybody does it this way, then

again thinking about it and going into more detail, I thought what is the difference between cold water and hot water!?

Zainab's Muslim friends and peers were all Pakistani. Zainab instead began to focus on a personal quest for religious knowledge of 'how' to be Muslim. For her this meant listening to the audio lectures of the renowned White American convert Hamza Yusuf. What this reveals is that different Muslims rely on different sources of Islam, thereby creating various understandings of what Islam entails. For example, female teachers at Al-Meezan and in *dars* throughout Glasgow follow and adopt the teachings of Dr Farhat Hashmi, a female theologian who has a doctorate in Islamic theology from the University of Glasgow. Hashmi is particularly influential amongst South Asian Muslim women, and established the Al-Huda foundation in different cities in Pakistan and in Canada, which offers Islamic education specifically for women. Hashmi pronounces a conservative traditional conservative ideology, wears the *niqab* (covering her head, leaving only the eyes visible) and refers to the traditional work of Mawlana Maududi (1903-1979). Maududi was prominent Muslim thinker who influenced Islamic movements through translated work in Arabic, English and other languages in places like India/Pakistan, the Middle East and in the 'West'. What was central to Maududi was that 'Muslims should return to a pure and pristine Islam and prepare themselves for the future despite being in a minority position' (Khalidi, 2003: 417).

Furthermore, the interpretation and translation of Islamic text from Arabic to English and other languages spoken by Muslims in New York is essential in the creation of a transnational connection to Muslims around the world. As a result, many individuals are completely dependent on oral translation and interpretation by those with formal training' (D'Agostino, 2003: 289). This is particularly so for my participants. The majority are non-Arabic speaking Muslims and their knowledge of Islam comes through translations both of the Qur'an and *hadith*, or through cultural interpretation of what 'Islam' says. D'Agostino found that most Muslims in New York believed that they were part of a global *Ummah* and identified with Muslims around the world. However, in spite of these sentiments D'Agostino comments that:

The problem is that, despite people's feelings of connection to the *Ummah*, the diversity of New York's Muslim population keeps the group fragmented. It is interesting that the sense of connection to Muslims in other locations does not automatically translate into similar connections within the space of New York City itself' (D'Agostino, 2003: 291).

I attended a *dars* class in the South Side of Glasgow, held every Tuesday in the private home of the woman who was the teacher. I approached several women who stated that they felt a real sense of solidarity with other women. Through coming together, organising social events and fundraisers, they stated that were a 'community' of believers. However, this 'community' was restricted to women over the age of 40, Pakistani, and those who had had a similar migratory experience. Although these women believed that their social ties and religious affiliation created a 'community', it was not a 'community' which extended to Glasgow's non-Pakistani Muslim population.

Other studies in diaspora have also found a shift towards a more global Islam. Johnsdotter (2003) found in her research that Swedish Somalis were discarding the practice of female circumcision in diaspora. Living in diaspora, some Somali Muslims were reinterpreting the practice not as a religious duty (as it was in Somalia) but going against religious teachings. The practice continues, according to Johnsdotter, because in African countries, religious texts are inaccessible and the study of the Qur'an and *hadith* sources is confined to the religious and educated elite. This is reflected in the situation in Glasgow. Religious texts have been the preserve of learned Muslims, especially men, but the Qur'an through religious classes/*dars*, has become more accessible to Muslim women. A move towards Islam in diaspora appears to have affected women more than men, because women (especially older women) who restricted to continue their education either academic or religious and prevented from entering the paid labour market. Thus, the freedom and independence of many Muslim women was curtailed not by religion but by male interpretation of what constitutes as 'women's appropriate role. Thus, what we are finding is that Muslim women in diaspora are exploring the Qur'an and *hadith* and implement this knowledge in their everyday life. Like Swedish Somalis, for some of my Muslim female participants, there is a clear separation between culture and religion with a particular inclination to the latter.

For some of my participants, religion had shifted from being an ethnic identification to one increasingly involving the practical guideline for living life in diaspora. Similarly, Tiilikainen (2003) found a distancing from traditional possession cults, which are now considered to be a non-Islamic cultural practice. For Somali women, religion is a moral and practical guideline, which helps Somalis to cope in a new cultural and religious environment. A large number of Somali men and women were engaged in studying or working. Yet, the majority of Somali mothers continued to stay at home looking after the house. Tiilikainen (2003) examined how

Islam was characterised in the daily life of Somali mothers. Women's principal religious space was in the home: they form Muslim space not only by their religious practices but also through modifying their home through ornaments, religious calligraphy, images from Makkah and prayer timetables. The visualised religious space is coupled by television, where they are able to connect with other Arab countries by listening to the recitation of the Qur'an. Although the interpretation of Islam continues to be undertaken by Somali men, women too are acquiring religious knowledge that allows them to be involved in religious teaching.

Women in diaspora however are able to use Islam as a 'dynamic toolkit' that is employed to support views and practices among adherents of a particular faith. Predelli's (2004) examined the way first-generation immigrant Muslim women in Oslo (Norway) understood gender relations in Islam and how they practiced it in their lives. Predelli categorised the women in her sample into four different types, which represent four analytical definitions of beliefs or views: culture-oriented traditionalists; sameness-oriented modernists; society-oriented and family-oriented Islamists. These women's views on gender relations ranged from those who believed that women have been given some rights but are less valuable than men (culture-oriented). That religion gives equal rights to women and men and both sexes are of equal value (sameness-oriented). That women's participation in home and society is important, and religion allocates women particular rights and that both sexes are of equal value (society-oriented) and finally the family-oriented Islamists believe that gender roles should be perceived as essentially dissimilar. Predelli (2004) comments that these women use Islam as an adaptable resource to endorse their own practice and views. This flexibility reveals that religion does not involve a set of static beliefs and rules but a 'malleable resource that can be adapted to various social circumstances. Religion, in other words, is a "dynamic toolkit" that can be used to support a range of views and practices among adherents of a particular faith tradition' (Predelli, 2004: 473). We find in my sample that Muslim women (as do men) in Glasgow use Islam in a number of ways to support their beliefs on issues such as the *hijab*, domestic work and homosexuality. Predelli (2004) points out that for many Muslim immigrants in Norway, Islam was the most important aspect of their identity (Predelli, 2004: 474). This was the case in my sample: 61% (20) of men and 46% (19) of female participants choosing religion as the most important aspect of their identity. Predelli (2004) concludes by stating that immigrant Muslim women in Oslo use Islam as a:



Flexible resource for interpreting their own constraints and opportunities in paid labor and in the family. Their gender practices and views are in part determined by the interpretive stand they take of Islam. . . Women's actual interpretations of Islam are informed by their upbringing and education, their class and cultural identity, their knowledge of normative Islamic discourse, their esteem for religious leaders who interpret Islam, and the women and men they interact with in everyday life (Predelli, 2004: 489)

Predelli highlights the importance of social, economic and cultural factors in the way Muslims choose to interpret religion. This is relevant for somebody like Nadia (Female, 33) a British born Pakistani. After taking a course on race, class and gender equality at university she said that for the first time she was able to see how men have subjugated minorities, especially women. Furthermore, she was able to explore the issue of women's rights according to a 'Western' feminist perspective. In contrast, somebody like Yasmin (48), who has been living in Glasgow for 30 years and has been a housewife all of her married life, felt that the role of a housewife and mother was prescribed for women in the Qur'an. Yet, given that she had very little education, was not permitted to work by her husband and was not afforded the opportunity to lead an independent life, she was influenced by what she believed to be woman's role to be in Islam.

Gibb and Rothenberg's (2000) study on Palestinian and Harari immigrant women in Toronto (Canada) is also relevant to my study as it indicates how a move towards greater integration with the local Muslim 'community' for Harari women meant relinquishing the power they possessed in their native homeland. The researchers examined how their cultural and local religious practices in Eastern Ethiopia and the West Bank (Palestine) have changed in their new surroundings. For many of the women in diaspora their Muslim identity gains greater value and significance. That is, they identify as being Muslim rather than Palestinian, Harari or Ethiopian (Gibb & Rothenberg, 2000: 243). However, this transformation for Harari women also affects the gender roles that they play in that the religious space becomes more restricted. Consequently, this bounds Harari women from forming any sense of independence and power in diaspora. In diaspora, some of my female participants *do* gain a sense of independence and power through increased awareness and knowledge of their faith. Moreover, for Harari's being part of the Muslim 'community' in Toronto necessitates adjusting to a particular understanding of what is considered religious practice. In Toronto, for instance, practices such as visiting shrines of saints and saint worship are considered to be un-Islamic. The concept of *Ummah* suggests standardised religious practice and celebration. Harari's

congregate, pray and celebrate in mosque with Muslims of different nationalities and races in Toronto. In the next section I examine Islam as a practice for my participants.

#### 4.4 ISLAM IN PRACTICE

In this section, I examine and combine the empirical data from the questionnaire (Appendix C) and the data yielded from the interviews. I was interested in how important Islam was to the way participants led their lives, I used three general questions to measure adherence to Islamic practices<sup>14</sup>. The importance of, and commitment to religious practices was assessed by measuring their activity/inactivity in the following four pillars of Islam (*Salat*, *Sawm*, *Zakah* and *Hajj*). Submission to Allah requires Muslims to be active in performing four of the five pillars (the first being a pronouncement of faith). When we examine Muslims and Islamic beliefs, 'the correct question is 'what do Muslims do?' (Esposito, 1991: 68). Thus, participants were categorised as practising or non-practising Muslims, as we can see from Table 5:

Table 5: Practising or Non-Practising Muslims			
Practising/ Non- Practising Muslim	Male	Practising/ Non- Practising Muslim	Female
Practising	24 (73%)	Practising	22 (63%)
Non-Practising	9 (27%)	Non-Practising	13 (37%)
Total	33	Total	35

Roald (2001) notes that 'in contemporary times there is no official control of Muslims' Islamic practises. The individual is responsible for her/his own Islamic performance' (Roald, 2001: 22). Nevertheless, people are aware that there is a distinction between 'pristine' Islam (the ideal) and 'traditional' Islam (the practised) (Emerson, 1996). This makes differentiating practising from non-practising a difficult task. Because there may well be a difference between what people actually do and what they feel they should be doing, participants may exaggerate their religiosity in interviews. Sander (1997) developed four different definitions of 'Muslim': ethnic, cultural, religious and political. Firstly, an 'ethnic Muslim' is born in an 'environment dominated by a Muslim tradition, belonging to a Muslim people, of Muslim origin' (Sander, 1997: 184). A 'cultural Muslim' is anyone who through socialisation has internalised the Muslim cultural tradition. His/her frame of reference, thoughts and behaviours are imbued and given meaning by the 'Muslim cognitive universe' (cultural, political and religious tradition and history defined from a Muslim perspective). According to Sander (1997), cultural Muslims vary

<sup>14</sup> In what way does Islam influence your life? Is the Qur'an and the *hadith* a source of guidance for you in your life? and what does being a Muslim mean to you?

from one another in their norm-and value systems, their political opinions, their attitudes towards Islam as a religion. A 'religious Muslim' is anyone who acknowledges specific beliefs and is involved in religious services and practices, lastly, a Muslim in the 'political' sense is someone who considers Islam as a total way of life for both the society as well as the individual. Where appropriate, I apply these definitions to highlight the difference and similarity between participants. It is important to examine the behavioural aspects of religiosity, which are fundamental to the definition of being a 'Muslim'. Participants themselves described being a Muslim as something that required activity. Therefore, one is a Muslim when one 'acts' like a Muslim and performs the duties required of him/her. Bilal, a practising Muslim from Morocco who had been living in Scotland for 4 years, believes that:

Once you have that knowledge and you understand and practise the five pillars of Islam then that means you are a Muslim, then that in turn means that Islam is affecting your life. A Muslim means to me, a genuine, faithful, honest man, these are the qualities of being a Muslim, plus worshipping, *Hajj* and fasting. (Bilal, Male 28)

To be a Muslim involved the practice of the pillars of Islam. Data from the questionnaire and interview reveals that religion was central in self-identification: 61% of men and 46% of female participants chose religion as the most important aspect of their identity:

Table 6: I Would Describe Myself By My:			
Male		Female	
Religion	20 (61%)	Religion	16 (46%)
Nationality	10 (30%)	Nationality	12 (34%)
Gender	1 (3%)	Gender	1 (3%)
Ethnicity	2 (6%)	Ethnicity	5 (14%)
Race	-	Race	1 (3%)
Total	33	Total	35

While Table 7 illustrates that 70% of men and 65% of women stated that Islam is 'very important' in their life with both 9% of men and women choosing 'not important':

Table 7: Importance of Islam for Participants			
Male		Female	
Very Important	23 (70%)	Very Important	23 (65%)
Fairly Important	7 (21%)	Fairly Important	9 (26%)
Not Important	3 (9%)	Not Important	3 (9%)
Total	33	Total	35

In general, participants claimed to have a strong adherence to religious beliefs. The findings from my research are supported by previous studies. Hutnik's (1985) study on identity markers among South Asian, West Indian and British youths, found that 80% of the individuals in the sample emphasised the importance of their Muslim identity. She states that 'religion was an extremely important means of self-definition for the South Asian group' (Hutnik, 1985: 304). Similarly Modood et al. (1994), found that a substantial number (74%) of Muslims stated that religion was 'very important', with 21% saying it was 'fairly important' in the way they live their life. According to Gardner & Shukur (1994), British Muslim young people are increasingly defining themselves in relation to their religion, rather than to their parental country of origin. Schmidt (2002) in her study with young Muslims in Sweden and Los Angeles found that they perceived their religion as an ethnic category, Schmidt referred to this as the 'ethnification of Islam'. The merging of religion with ethnicity was a way for young Muslims to ease the sense of "'in-betweenness" of hybrid migrant identities' (Schmidt, 2002: 15). Schmidt's study highlights that despite being divided by cultural and national differences they are increasingly coming together through their religious association. Thus Schmidt (2002) points out that a commitment to their parent's native homeland is no longer perceived as being as important as their attachment to the Muslim lifestyle.

For participants in my research, Islam was characterised as an essential guide which dictates how they must live their life, the types of occupation they could engage in and how they should behave with others and family. The following response to the question: 'in what way Islam important in your life?' illustrates this: 'our life is dictated by Islam, it's a whole state of being, it's not just the practices' (Haroon, Male 36). Islam is more than a religion it is a comprehensive way of life. Participants were also aware of the consequences of their actions: 'if you separate your life from Islam then you're guarantying yourself hell' (Rashid, Male 35). For Rashid, a Pakistani migrant who was a practising Muslim a move away or detachment from Islam has serious repercussions. Thus, to be a Muslim requires faithful practice of one's religious beliefs, to be responsible for one's actions and to be fearful of the consequences in the hereafter. The *hadith* was also an important source of guidance for some Muslims in my sample, yet, no one in particular highlighted *hadith* from a specific collection (for e.g. *Bukhari*, *Maliki* and so on). The *hadith* did however, provide rules for religious practice and behaviour the *hadith* was inseparable from the Qur'an: '*hadith* has come from *Rasullallah*<sup>15</sup> (PBUH<sup>16</sup>) and

---

<sup>15</sup> Messenger/Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>16</sup> Peace Be Upon Him

when you are following Islam you follow both the Qur'an and *hadith*, they come together as a package' (Kausar, Female 49). When questioned about the *hadith* applicability in today's society Abbas, a practising Muslim from Iraq who had been living in Britain for 19 years responded by saying:

Most instruction or commandment made in Qur'an and *hadith* are flexible to allow for change in lifestyle, change of time. This is why we say it is applicable to any time and to any place. It is possible to take the same concept and apply it to a different life if you think of it, even 1400 years ago, if it was not flexible enough they would not have been able to apply it to different societies. (Abbas, Male 52)

The *hadith* was an essential source to practice one's faith in a correct manner. Some drew attention to the relevance of *hadith* on matters relating to the prayer and the depth of detail it provided to understand the Qur'an:

Without [*hadith*] you can't understand the Qur'an, the Qur'an gives us the basic, if it's telling you about divorce, you will know about divorce but we need to have the background of why God has said these things to us and for that guidance we need *hadith* and without *hadith* we cannot understand. (Nafisa, Female, 37)

Yet, the *hadith* involves 'following' the Prophet's behaviour not imitating him because the former entails 'a conscious activity involving the intellect, which require a general awareness of all factors surrounding the example to be followed' (al'Alwani & Khalil, 1991: 30). Yet, there was a note of caution in accepting *hadith*:

You should never refer to *hadith* on its own, you have to look at the Qur'an first and then *hadith*. It's good to look at everything contextually and also to look at all the verses or *hadith* dealing with certain subjects in one go so you have a whole view of the subject area. (Haroon, Male 36)

In general, a number of participants adhered to and defended the *hadith*. Both the Qur'an and *hadith* were essential sources of guidance. However, the extent to which participants practiced their religious duties varied. As we can see from Table 8, 63% of males and 59% of females reported that they actively practiced their faith primarily through daily<sup>17</sup> prayers:

---

<sup>17</sup> This includes praying five, four/three times a day and once a day or more.

Table 8: How Often Do You Pray?			
Frequency	Male	Frequency	Female
Five Times a Day	9 (27%)	Five Times a Day	8 (22%)
Four/Three Times a Day	3 (9%)	Four/Three Times a Day	2 (6%)
Once a Day or More	9 (27%)	Once a Day or More	11 (31%)
Once a Week ( <i>Juma</i> )	1 (3%)	Once a Week ( <i>Juma</i> )	1 (3%)
Occasionally	5 (16%)	Occasionally	9 (26%)
On Special Occasions	3 (9%)	On Special Occasions	1 (3%)
Rarely	1 (3%)	Rarely	1 (3%)
Never	2 (6%)	Never	2 (6%)
Total	33	Total	35

Previous research has consistently found that women tend to be more religious than men (deVaus & McAllister, 1987), data from my research does not reveal a significant correlation between gender and religiosity. In general, women and men prayed regularly and the frequency of prayers was also similar. The only discernible difference between men and women in total was that more men prayed five, four/three times a day as compared to women: 36% and 28% respectively. However, attendance at mosque was associated with gender (cf. Modood et al., 1997). In my sample, 15% of men attended at least once a day compared to no female participants. The greatest difference was in the weekly mosque attendance, with 61% of men but only 11% of women attending the Friday prayers (*Juma*). As Table 9 shows:

Table 9: How Frequently Do You Visit the Mosque?			
Frequency	Male	Frequency	Female
Once a Day or More	5 (15%)	Once a Day or More	-
Once a Week ( <i>Juma</i> )	20 (61%)	Once a Week ( <i>Juma</i> )	4 (11%)
Occasionally	2 (6%)	Occasionally	12 (35%)
On Special Occasions	3 (9%)	On Special Occasions	9 (26%)
Rarely	2 (6%)	Rarely	5 (14%)
Never	1 (3%)	Never	5 (14%)
Total	33	Total	35

In Modood's et al. (1997), survey there was a similar pattern: although he found 62% of Muslims attended the mosque at least once a week or more, attendance levels varied according to one's gender with a third of all women (aged 16-50+) never attending the mosque, but most men attending once a week. Some female and male participants pointed out that Muslim men and boys should offer the obligatory (*fard*) Friday prayers in a mosque as part of a congregation, while women and girls are given the option of praying privately in their

home or in the mosque (cf. Sarwar, 2000). Women in my research were most likely to attend the mosque occasionally (35%) or on special occasions (26%) (e.g. for Eid prayers) (refer to Table 9 above). Zahra (38) Nafisa (37), Najma (50) and Saima (46) said they attended 'once a week' to pray *Juma*. The latter three were Pakistani while Zahra was an Iraqi. All were over the age of 35 and resided in the Southside of the city where there are several mosques. From the 12 women who stated that they attended the mosque 'occasionally', 8 were aged between 16 and 29, and were British born. The remaining 4 were Moroccan, Bosnian and Pakistani. From the females who stated they 'never' (5) or 'rarely' (5) attended the mosque were all non-practising, with the exception of Misbah who was 70 years old. The remaining 9 females were all over the age of 20. Finally, 9 stated that they only attended 'on special occasions', this referred to Eid and other religious functions. Of these women, 5 were non-practising (2 of whom were converts) while the remaining 4 were practising Muslim.

#### 4.5 REDISCOVERY OF RELIGION BY GLASGOW'S MUSLIM WOMEN

Learning to read the Qur'an is perhaps one of the most important aspects of a Muslim child's religious upbringing, for my participants this had involved learning the Qur'an by attending a religious school or going to the local mosque. Most of my participant learnt the Qur'an by rote, yet, some felt at a disadvantage because the method simply involved repetition and memorisation of the Qur'an, they were ignorant about the actual meanings of the verses. The Islam that they practiced was transmitted to them from their parents. However, Afshar et al., indicates that Muslims born and raised in Britain will take an individualistic approach to understanding Islam. For example, young Muslim women who are British born and bred equipped with Islamic knowledge criticise and challenge the interpretations of Islam of their parents (Afshar et al., 2005: 268). Since for younger Muslims the cultural transmission of Islamic knowledge is from a mindset different from their own understanding of Islam. Indeed, it is this form of Islam, which has given rise to 'hyphenated identities' such as British-Muslim, British-Asian. This is also reflected in the emergence organisations such as Islamic Society of Britain, Young Muslims UK, and various University Muslim Associations.

Samad (1998) points out that in contrast to their parents who were taught orally, young Muslims understanding of Islam is mainly textual, mostly written and produced by Islamist groups. For instance, young men and women in Samad's (1998) study were able to discern the difference between traditional attitudes and that of textual Islam on a number of issues that affected them: arranged and forced marriages, work, education and dress. In my sample,

Samra, who was single and lived with her parents, stated that because she was financially independent and educated: 'I think he [father] realises because I'm working he can no longer control us, we're educated now'. She also said she was able to attend religious lectures in the evenings although she had to inform her parents when she would return. Samra, a British born Pakistani, was active in her religion, and attended lectures and *dars*. Indeed, she felt that she was able to answer objections by her parents regarding her involvement in religious activities. Her father, a Pakistani immigrant, did not think it was appropriate for his daughter to be out late at night. This was partly because he did not believe that religion allowed it, but perhaps more so because he was concerned about how his daughter would be perceived by other Muslims in his neighbourhood. Nevertheless, Samra's example indicates how through an understanding of Islam through lectures and textual material, she is able to forge her identity as an independent Muslim women.

The expression of a Muslim identity in recent years has become more prominent amongst European Muslims as they become more visible (Cesari, 2003). In Glasgow, this is evidence in the emergence of *dars*. The *dars* involves the dissemination of religious knowledge. Women across Glasgow organise weekly religious lessons, many of them in private homes, to read and understand the Qur'an. Muslim women have the opportunity to engage in Islamic study learning through Arabic. They are guided by a learned person who has embarked on training of Islamic studies, Arabic, *tafsir* (scholarly interpretation) of the Qur'an, proper recitation of the Qur'an (*tajweed*) and *fiqh*. First generation Muslim women from Pakistan and India did not have the opportunity to participate in the mosque. Public religious space in the diaspora however, is now open to Muslim women. When I attended a *dars* class in the South Side of Glasgow there were around 30 women some of whom were illiterate, all were first generation Pakistanis who had been living in Glasgow for the past 30/40 years, many of these women belonged to an 'oral cultural tradition' (Samad, 1998). Some of them had been attending the *dars* for the past 5 years while some women had joined only recently. Islam is being mediated to them through the study of scripture.

By attending the classes these women understand what is being recited, they go through each line in the Qur'an in Arabic and then discuss the *tafsir* in detail in Urdu. They are tested each week on the memorisation of the commentary in Urdu and Arabic. Similar *dars* also available in English for second-generation Pakistani Muslim women. Many of the women I talked to, said that the class offered them an opportunity to learn about what 'Islam really says' and



allowed them to discern between cultural Islam and 'real Islam' (cf. Cesari, 2003). Indeed, there are suggestions that young Muslims in Europe identify more strongly with Islam than with their own ethnic culture (Cameron, 2002). The classes tie these women together linking them to and creating a 'community' of believers (Ruby, 2006). For instance, women at the *dars* organised fundraisers at the mosque to raise money for poverty stricken Pakistanis, and were involved with an orphan program in Pakistan. Although they stated that money was sent to Muslim countries where it was needed the most, in general, charity started at 'home' (i.e. Pakistan). As one woman put it: 'when I came here (Scotland) I identified as a Pakistani woman but now the most important aspect of my life is my *din*, Islam'. These women's identities have been transformed with traditional loyalties to 'home' and ethnic culture weakened.

The newly opened Al-Meezan<sup>18</sup> centre in Pollokshields holds classes every day of the week, from improving recitation of the Qur'an, *tajweed* to understanding the *tafsir* of the Qur'an and *hadith*. It is the first Muslim centre in both Scotland and Glasgow funded by donations and is managed and run by women. The centre, which has around 600 attendants, caters primarily for women. What is happening is a re-discovery of religion by Muslim women of all ages, older women are re-reading the Qur'an to improve their recitation, grammar, but not only reading what the Qur'an means in their own language but simultaneously understanding Arabic. While young Muslim women who attend weekly Islamic classes have benefited from a 'Western' education system and 'Western' values that encourages them to reflexively question and critically debate what they have been taught (Cesari, 2003). There were 5 females<sup>19</sup> who regularly attended *dars*. Nafisa (Female, 37), a Pakistani divorcee who lived on her own, discusses the benefits she gains from attending *dars*:

Whenever I'm really stressed, I go to the *dars* and that *ayah* is telling me what to do, whatever the translation is, that's the guidance from Allah and automatically it relates to my life.

Since her divorce, Nafisa has found solace and support from her faith. Attending and engaging in religious activities such as the *dars* also provided women with a source of support, friendship, a sense of 'community' (*Ummah*). Yet, although we are seeing the emergence of religious centres for women, my research suggests that the mosque continues to be a place of

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.almeezan.co.uk>

<sup>19</sup> This was not a formal question in the interview, but females informed me that they attended an Islamic Circle or *dars* in response to the question on the importance of religion in their life.

worship for men. However, this has not detracted women from developing their own 'self-conscious exploration of the religion' (Knott & Khokher, 1993: 596). My research supports the idea that there has been a development of 'two novel elements: the growth of frequent religious gatherings among Muslim women, and an autonomous movement among Muslim women outside the mosque' (Modood et al., 1997: 303). In other areas, there was little difference between the sexes, with 91% of women and 85% of men fasting during the month of Ramadan, as Table 10 indicates:

Table 10: Fasting in the Month of Ramadan			
Do You Fast?	Male	Do You Fast?	Female
Yes	28 (85%)	Yes	32 (91%)
No	5 (15%)	No	3 (9%)
Total	33	Total	35

More men (33% and 45%) than women (23% and 29%) had done *Hajj* and *Umrah*<sup>20</sup> as we can see from Tables 11 & 12:

Table 11: Have You Done <i>Hajj</i>			
<i>Hajj</i>	Male	<i>Hajj</i>	Female
Yes	11 (33%)	Yes	8 (23%)
No	22 (67%)	No	27 (77%)
Total	33	Total	35

Table 12: Have You Done <i>Umrah</i>			
<i>Umrah</i>	Male	<i>Umrah</i>	Female
Yes	15 (45%)	Yes	10 (29%)
No	18 (55%)	No	25 (71%)
Total	33	Total	35

Only 8 women had done the *Hajj* and *Umrah*, and were aged between 36 and 70 only 2 were British born Pakistanis, the remaining 6 were Pakistani, Iraqi and Indian. While 2 women: Nafisa (37) and Farah (32) had done the *Umrah*, the former was born in Pakistani while the latter in Britain. There were 11 Male participants who had done the *Hajj*, and were aged between 32 and 65. Only 3 were British born (Pakistani and Egyptian). The remaining 8 were from Iraq, Pakistan and India. Moreover, the 3 men who had done *Umrah* but not the *Hajj*, were all British born and non-practising Muslims. The difference in the number of men and

<sup>20</sup> A Pilgrimage to Makkah. Also called 'the Lesser Pilgrimage'.

women doing the *Hajj* may be explained by the prohibition of women performing the Hajj or *Umrah* without a *mahram*, men are free to make the pilgrimage on their own. This is based on the following *hadith*:

Narated By Ibn 'Abbas: The Prophet said, "A woman should not travel except with a Dhu-Mahram (her husband or a man with whom that woman cannot marry at all according to the Islamic Jurisprudence), and no man may visit her except in the presence of a Dhu-Mahram". A man got up and said, "O Allah's Apostle! I intend to go to such and such an army and my wife wants to perform Hajj". The Prophet said (to him), "Go along with her (to Hajj)"<sup>21</sup>

Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian Muslim scholar who is engaged in reformist interpretation of Islam is regarded as a 'moderate' in religious and social matters. Qaradawi argues that the principle in *Shari'ah* is that a woman is not to travel by herself and it is obligatory for her to have a *mahram* as a companion. He notes that despite the ruling reported in *Bukhari* and others, the basis for this ruling is to maintain the woman's reputation and dignity. He points out that jurists have examined this issue in relation to the obligation of *Hajj* upon women and have kept Prophet Muhammad's prohibition in mind. The prohibition of a woman travelling without a *mahram* is not allowed because it obstructs the possibility of evil of women travelling alone. Yet, the way we travel today is different from the past, women are able to travel in a variety of transport with large number of people, thus removing any fears of tarnishing the woman's dignity. He concludes by saying that this is why the objection for the woman to perform *Hajj* is lessened, because by travelling safely and in large numbers she is in a safer environment which gives her the required security. Therefore, Qaradawi concludes that the acceptability of a woman travelling without a *mahram* is based on there being security and the presence of trustworthy faithful people<sup>22</sup>. A significant number of both male (88% and 67%) and female (86% and 60%) participants stated that they gave *Sadaqa* and *Zakah*, as Tables 13 & 14 show:

Table 13: Do You Give <i>Sadaqa</i> ?			
Yes/No	Male	Yes/No	Female
Yes	29 (88%)	Yes	30 (86%)
No	4 (12%)	No	5 (14%)
Total	33	Total	35

<sup>21</sup> Bukhari. Volume 3, Book 029, *Hadith* Number 085.

<sup>22</sup> Online Fatwa on: 'Woman Travelling to Hajj Without a Mahram' WWW Document: [http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?cid=1119503544964&pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask\\_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaEAskTheScholar](http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?cid=1119503544964&pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaEAskTheScholar)

Table 14: Do You Give <i>Zakah</i> ?			
Yes/No/Not Applicable	Male	Yes/No/Not Applicable	Female
Yes	22 (67%)	Yes	21 (60%)
No	3 (9%)	No	3 (9%)
Not Applicable	8 (24%)	Not Applicable	11 (31%)
Total	33	Total	35

Not all participants were practising Muslims, with 18% of male and 12% female participants praying on 'special occasions', 'rarely' or 'never' (See Table 8). For Azhar, a non-practising British born Pakistani being a Muslim was a nominative 'badge':

It's important in the sense that it provides me with an identity I can identify with other Muslims around the world . . . but if I was being truthful, I guess it's a badge, if someone asked what my religion was I would say I am a Muslim. Yet, if they were to question me on the belief of a Muslim I could only iterate the absolute basics. (Azhar, Male 23)

For other participants, religion was considered to have some significance in the ordering of their daily lives. These men and women, like Azhar, are 'cultural Muslims' according to Sander's (1997) definition of the term Muslim. That is, religion provided them with a code of behaviour:

I feel that Islam provides me with a set of principles, which I can apply to my life (Tariq, Male 40).

I see the importance of Islam having a slightly structured lifestyle (Nadia, Female 33)

For these non-practising participants although religion did not dictate their life it continued to be a prominent aspect in their life, culturally, morally and socially. They highlighted the important role that religion plays in their social life ('not socialising in pubs', Rahila, Female 28) and emphasised the moral virtues it provides. They continued to draw guidance from Islam. For Rukhsana (Female, 33), a British born Pakistani, being a Muslim meant conforming to rules and regulations, which restricted her freedom:

I don't ever remember it [Islam] being particularly important which is why I'm non-practising. I don't hold any Islamic principles, I do what I want, when I want. [Being a Muslim] means a lot of grief, basically . . . there's pressure to

conform for your parents sake, and their honour and *izzat* [honour/respect]. (Rukhsana, Female, 33).

Rukhsana had been brought up in an environment where Islam was not important. Although she was emphatic about being free from the strictures of religion and did what she wanted to do: smoked, drank alcohol, had had sexual relationships, lived with her non-Muslim partner. She spoke of the pressure exerted upon her by her parents and indeed the Muslim 'community' to conform. Islam, for Nadia (Female 33), a British born Pakistani, who identified as a feminist, was a particular cause of women's oppression:

I think that there are a lot of clauses in the Qur'an that men can kind of work round and if those clauses weren't there, there would be leeway. It's just very clear when you read the Qur'an or the translation of the Qur'an that the power lies with men. Men can have four wives at the same time, I know that there are certain rules that go with it, but who cares about the rules, they just do it anyway, as far as they are concerned the Qur'an says they can and they will (Nadia, Female 33).

There are aspects associated with Islam and Islamic practice (permission to marry four times<sup>23</sup>) that for Nadia are fundamental to the subordination of women. Despite saying that religion provided her with a 'structured lifestyle', the views she held as a feminist were incompatible with religious principles and traditions. Religion and the way it is interpreted is used by men to claim divine justification to suppress and subordinate women.

#### 4.6 CONCLUSION

Participants' religious identity and levels of religiosity varied from an adherence to religious practice (praying, fasting) to a nominal association. Participants indicated and endeavoured to live a religious life, where they prayed regularly (varying from five times a day to occasionally), gave to charity, paid *Zakah*, fasted during *Ramadan* and made or attempted to make the pilgrimage (*Hajj* and *Umrah*). There was an acknowledgment that religion played a central and important role in the way they led their lives. Belief in *hadith* was also fundamental to understanding and religion. Yet, as with any religious groups, there are variations and participants understanding of religion and religious practices should not be taken to be static. Participants would frequently make references to what 'Islam says', indeed, this is seen in religious texts. This is based on the assumption that there is one monolithic Islam. Yet, the interpretation and the practice of Islam differs. The Islam that each participant makes

---

<sup>23</sup> Qur'an, 4:3.

reference to varies according to their own understanding and experience. There were varying levels of commitment to religion, with some participants choosing not to pray or fast or even identify as being Muslim. Yet, for those who may not practise their religion, it still structured their life and provided them with a frame of reference. This is what Sander's (1997) refers to as 'Muslim cognitive universe'. That is, religion remains an important moral and social framework, which culturally influences the behaviour and lifestyle of non-practising Muslims. In the next chapter, I provide a detailed analysis of femininity in ('Western') sociological literature, how it has been constructed and conceptualised. I then detail the position of woman in Islamic religious texts (Qur'an and *hadith*). In order to gain an understanding of how Islam and Islamic interpretation of the texts create an ideal femininity. I also examine the role religion has on shaping both female and male perception and understanding of femininity. What are the qualities my participants attribute to femininity, and in a more general sense, how do these ideas shape the lives of Muslim women (and men).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FEMININITY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss the literature on femininity, its construction and the qualities associated with the term in 'Western' sociological theory. This is not an exhaustive review, I have selected work I feel is related to my research. It should be pointed out that most of the work cited has studied women from a 'Western' feminist perspective. 'Western' feminism is grounded in 'Western' values, thought and ideology. However, I examine feminist research to see how applicable their work is in understanding the construction of femininity by my Muslim participants. I look in detail at the work of Terman and Miles (1936) sex-role theory; Simone de Beauvoir and her work 'The Second Sex' (1973). Ortner's (1974) article 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?'; Marilyn French's theories on 'inlaw/outlaw woman'. I examine Butler's (1990; 1993; 1997) theory on performativity and I also consider Connell's (2002) work on emphasized femininity. In the second section, I examine how modern and traditional Muslim scholars have interpreted the female role according to the Qur'an & *hadith*. In particular I refer to the work of Muslim feminist scholars who through the exegesis of Islamic text, question the scriptural foundations often used to explain the restraints on women's position in the family and society.

In chapter six, I consider the construction of femininity by my participants. I pay particular attention to the way Muslim women are influenced by their ideas about femininity. Much recent work has focussed on the contemporary feminine experience in the 'West'. Yet, by treating the experiences of White females as universal, feminism alienates women who are not defined by this description. A great deal of research has assessed how women in the 'West' construct femininity. Although information gleaned from existing research illuminates a series of questions relevant to Muslim women, we ultimately know very little about how femininity is actively constructed and experienced by Muslim women as no empirical research has been conducted on Muslim women's understandings of their own feminine identity. This is compounded by the fact that sociologists who have addressed the subject have almost uniformly failed to explore sociological theories about religion in their work because religion is seen as a tool of male oppression. I examine the definitions, explanations and meanings women (and men) attribute to femininity and feminine behaviour. I also examine the debate about the *hijab* and how traditional scholars and modern Muslim feminist interpret the *hijab*. I

also examine women's dress in particular the *hijab* and examine why it is worn, what are the religious prescription on the *hijab*. Moreover, are the reasons why women choose to wear it universally shared around the world or are there distinct differences?

In the final section, I examine the position of Muslim women and men in the domestic sphere. Despite the plethora of work on the domestic division of labour, the arrangement and responsibility of domestic work who Muslim households in Britain has elicited very little interest. Although there has been 'very little research on domestic divisions of labour in ethnic minority households what exists suggests that similar patterns prevail' (Charles, 2002: 51). However, this creates a generalised picture of the experience of ethnic minorities and women and housework. Charles (2002) indicates the commonality of ethnic minorities based on very little research. Indeed, her references to 'patterns' glosses over and ignores the multitude of factors (ethnicity, religion and cultural custom), which contribute to the domestic role of ethnic minority women. The focal point of this section is the examination of how participants divide housework and how such work is marked by gender.



## THE STUDY OF GENDER FROM 'WESTERN' SOCIOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINTS

I have undertaken a variety of approaches in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the construction of femininity in the 'West'. I begin by identifying several different terms commonly used to describe gender behaviour and thus define the identity of individuals used over the course of gender identity research in sociology. The construction of femininity and the representation of appropriate means of performing such identities is the central aim of this research. I use the singular term femininity throughout this thesis not only to complement the term masculinity in the following chapters, but also to indicate that both male and female participants use a normative model of femininity.

### 5.2 TERMINOLOGY

In sociology, sex (man and woman) is biologically determined but it is gender which gives social and cultural meaning to sexual difference. Femininity and masculinity refer to a collection of traits that are individually learned and socially prescribed. Since gender is socially produced and not inherent. Definitions and the conceptualisation of femininity vary by age, culture, race and sexuality. Femininity and masculinity or one's gender identity refers to the degree of self-identification as either masculine or feminine. Males are expected to display 'masculine' behaviour and females 'feminine' behaviour (French, 1985). However, because these definitions are socially constructed it is possible for a female to be masculine, and a male to be feminine. Gender role refers to the expectations of behaviour according to one's gender and are defined by a set of personality traits believed to be appropriate to men and women. Definitions of femininity have varied, however, central to feminist research the traits described as feminine have been criticised as a conceptual tool because it oppresses and confines female experience to a 'rigid code of appearance and behaviour defined by do's and don't-do's' (Brownmiller, 1986: 2). The most basic definition of femininity is a set of qualities assigned to females (Glover & Caplan, 2000). Femininity constitutes the devalued part of the gender axis (masculinity/femininity) by its continual designation to the realm of the 'natural'. While masculinity is principally understood to be a cultural achievement (Niranjana, 2001). Connell (2002) describes the three most influential approaches to gender as: 'the idea of natural difference, which treats the body as a machine; the idea of two separate realms of sex and gender; and the idea of gender as a discursive or symbolic system, which treats bodies as a canvas on which society paints' (Connell, 2002: 30).

### 5.3 FEMINISM

Feminism, the doctrine that advocates equal rights for women has shifted over the last four decades. The term encompasses diverse perspectives on what constitutes discrimination against women. First wave feminism initiated the movement which worked for the reform of women's social and legal inequalities in the nineteenth century. It involved granting women a political and legal status. In the 1960s, second wave feminism was characterised by feminist activism in the 'West' (America and Europe). The key focus was to emphasise the distinction between sex and gender. Broadly speaking in the 1970s there were three main branches of feminism: liberal feminism which emphasises the equality of the sexes in opportunity and rights. Socialist feminism a branch of feminism which focussed on the economic, class and cultural aspects which work to oppress women lay more emphasis on social relationships. While radical feminism accentuated the difference between males and females, moreover, for radical feminists, sexual relations and sexuality were essential to patriarchal oppression and thus they worked to eradicate patriarchy in society. There are different types or different expressions of feminisms which examine the various ways women are oppressed. Therefore, one cannot reduce feminism to one single branch, as James (2000) points out that

Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretations of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program. (James, 2000: 576).

The work of feminists has been instrumental in the understanding and theorisation of women's position in 'Western' society. Mainstream 'Western' feminist work began with the writings of early feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex' (1949). While Friedan in 'The Feminine Mystique' (1965), stated that women are seen only in their relationship with men and were bound to a life of domesticity. Yet, Friedan believed that through education and a career, women can work to end patriarchal oppression. These feminist writings were instrumental for the fight for women's liberation and emancipation from oppression. In the 1970s feminists considered a whole range of different areas which contributed to women's subjugation, Brownmiller (1975) for example analysed women's oppression through the threat of sexual violence and rape. While Spender (1980) examined how men as the dominant group have used language to suppress women. In the 1990s, Wolf's (1991) 'The Beauty Myth' argued that the images of women the fashion and beauty industry create are damaging to

women. That is, beauty makes women feel negative about themselves because they are unable to live by the ideal. The family was also the subject of feminist analysis. Women's everyday life in the family revealed it as an institution where the gendered division of labour is created and maintained, primarily because it situates women in the private sphere and men in the public sphere. As Oakley stated (1976) 'women's domesticity is a circle of learnt deprivation and induced subjugation: a circle decisively centred on family life' (Oakley, 1976: 233). Motherhood is at the heart of patriarchy (Rich, 1976), moreover, women's lives as mothers is a vocation that demands compliance, passivity and submission (Wilson, 1977). Rich (1976) spoke about women's experience of control and authority in connection to children. Yet, he contends that through domestication women's power is diminished. By being bound in the domestic sphere, women's access into the public is restricted: political, economic or legal involvement is reduced because of their commitment to the family. This marks the public/private realms more strictly. The work of feminists in the 'West' has been essential to understanding their position within the home/family as well as in the public sphere. Third 'wave' feminism discards the binary model of sex: man and woman. That is, there are no situated and fixed differences between men and women. Rather this 'difference' is not determined but constructed through the socialisation processes and the performance of gender. The common basis of the various branches of feminism is that gender is a critical category of analysis. The definition of feminism involves: an opposition to sex hierarchy (as opposed to sex equality); the idea that women's condition is socially constructed (and thus, alterable); and awareness that they occupy a distinct social as well as biological group. There are various feminist theoretical frameworks. Much of the research and work I review is influenced, guided and shaped by the fundamental principles of feminism.

### 5.3.1 ISLAMIC FEMINISTS

A criticism levelled against traditional Muslim male scholars and their interpretation is that they portray Islam as a-historic, contextually fixed, and disembodied ideal. Furthermore, Islam's message of equality and empowerment of women is neglected in favour of male control and power (Leo, 2005). Islamic feminists depend on *Ijtihād* which allows them to analyse gender by reinterpreting the texts. Feminists like Amina Muhsin-Wadud (Afro-American Muslim convert), Leila Ahmed (Egyptian), and Fatima Mernissi (Moroccan) through grammatical and theoretical interpretation of the Qur'an challenge taken for granted assumptions in certain *ahadith*, *fiqh* and *tafsir* because of the patriarchal and negative portrayal of women. Their work rejects medieval *fiqh* and *hadith*, which construct women as gendered beings because it

is a misinterpretation of the Qur'an. In essence, these writers 'pose modern questions that are more applicable to the lives of modern Muslim women than to the women who lived in the seventh-century world of the Prophet Muhammad' (Leo, 2005: 131). The prevalence of male interpretation of Islamic texts as well as the predominance of male clerics is why some have labelled Islam as a 'patriarchal' religion (Droeber, 2003: 415). Scholars both traditional and modern do not challenge the direct revelatory text of the Qur'an, however, the latter question the interpretation of the Qur'an (Imam, 2000: 122).

Barlas (2002), a Pakistani scholar based in America, has shown that the Qur'an is open to alternative readings to the one offered by patriarchal interpretations. She states that what is needed is an examination of the role that Muslim scholars have played in interpreting the Qur'an, how instrumental their work has been in forming religious knowledge and power which has restricted readings of the Qur'an in a purely patriarchal sense. By doing so, they point out alternative justifications that are used by conservatives and radical Muslims to restrict women's rights. Therefore, the central basis of Islamic feminism, as a Muslim feminist reform movement, is to challenge the patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an. It is a movement based on the Qur'an which offers an alternative interpretation that may benefit women's legal and social status in Muslim countries. The interpretation is in essence 'man's word', while the Qur'an is 'Allah's word'. Mernissi (1991) has investigated the historical roots of dominant Muslim views towards women, and argues that they have more to do with existing patriarchal norms than with theological foundations. She argues that women's rights have been interpreted through the *hadith* has cultural as opposed to religious doctrinal roots. Mernissi (1991) examined sections of the Qur'an and the *hadith* by using an historical-theological method from this she concludes that Islam promotes the equality of men and women, she continues by stating that:

Islam does not advance the thesis of women's inherent inferiority . . . On the contrary; the whole system is based on the assumption that women are powerful and dangerous beings. All sexual institutions (polygamy, repudiation, sexual segregation etc.) can be perceived as a strategy for containing power. (Mernissi, 1985:19).

Islamic feminist *tafsir* acknowledges that there are gender differences but there is equality that is clearly seen in the Qur'anic language with reference to humankind in the dual form *insan* (human being) (Badran, 2006). That is, acknowledging that there are two sexes does not

mean that inferior and superior ranks can be assigned on the basis of sex. Since this would challenge the idea of human equality presented in the Qur'an.

### 5.3.2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY IN THE 'WEST'

In the 1930s, Terman and Miles (1936) attempted the first assessment of gender identity. Early theorists assumed that the sexual division between men and women was based on intrinsic differences in characteristics, traits, and temperaments of males and females. They developed a scale for determining the degree of masculinity or femininity of an individual. It was the first to provide a test of masculine and feminine attributes and established the beginning of sex-role theory:

Masculinity and femininity are important aspects of human personality. They are not to be thought of as lending to it merely a superficial coloring and flavor; rather they are one of a small number of cores around which the structure of personality gradually takes shape (Terman & Miles, 1936: 451).

They considered masculinity and femininity as two contrasting types of personality, each located on one end of a single bipolar dimension (the M/F scale). The feminine role comprised of an extensive list of characteristics each with its opposite in the masculine role – such as roughness (M) versus tenderness (F), courage (M) versus timidity (F), self-reliance (M) versus dependence (F) and so on. In the M-F scale one could only be masculine or feminine but not both. I recognise that Terman and Miles (1936) work is dated, because they conceived of masculinity and femininity as inherent aspects of a person's character, yet, I feel their work is helpful in explaining the views of my participants. In my research, I examined whether male and female participants similarly understood gender as being innately determined and as bipolar. Femininity as a social construction is held to distinguish males and females and hence specify the psychological 'core' of feminine and masculine personalities.

In the 1970s, Simone de Beauvoir in 'The Second Sex' (1973) based her theory of gender by purporting that 'one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one' (Beauvoir, 1973: 301). Her work created an awareness of the social and cultural construction of femininity. Indeed, 'there is nothing natural or inherent about woman or femininity. All of our lived experiences, our psychologies, our understandings of our physical and mental capabilities and gifts - everything that we know and experience about ourselves - is filtered through our situatedness' (Card, 2003: 38). De Beauvoir claimed that society, by setting up oppositions such as

production/reproduction and culture/nature, places women in an inferior position (Evans, 1985). The terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' are asymmetrical because the masculine is man (and typifies mankind, whole and entire), while 'woman' represents a limited, particular feature of mankind. Women are closer to nature and men to culture. Ortner's (1974) article 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?' examined this relationship between nature and culture. She was concerned that 'everywhere, in every known culture, women are considered in some degree inferior to men' (Ortner, 1974: 69). She was interested in the reasons behind the universal subordination of females. She found that:

Woman's body seems to doom her to mere reproduction of life; the male in contrast, lacking natural creative functions, must (or has the opportunity to) assert his creativity externally, "artificially", through the medium of technology and symbols. In doing so he creates relatively lasting, eternal, transcending objects, while the woman creates only perishables - human beings' (Ortner, 1974: 239).

Ortner argued that men are attached to culture while women are fixed to nature, and it is the close relationship of women with nature that reinforces their inferiority to men. Men are constructed as closer to worldly achievement, while a woman, because her body dooms her to reproduction, is confined to her role as mother (this association is tied with their menstrual cycle and motherhood). This dichotomous structure places culture (men) over and above nature (women). According to Ortner (1974) although women are not explicitly suppressed by men, they become 'other' to the male 'self'. However, Ortner's work has been criticised because she uses a European, 'Western' ideology as a universal model (McCormack 1980). Moreover, McCormack comments that: 'Ortner states that 'everywhere, in every known culture, women are considered in some degree inferior to men'. But she does not say by whom they are considered to be so. By men? By women? By how many?' (McCormack 1980: 17). French (1985), in contrast, focussed on explaining the difference between the masculine and feminine principle, the former is entrenched in power-in-the-world, the latter is ingrained in nature with its embodying act: to give birth. Since the feminine principle is rooted in nature, it is not a complete human principle. Rather its relationship with flexibility, transience, and fluidity symbolises its weakness with the flesh, nature and procreation.

Femininity represents sexuality and bodily pleasure, including compassion and sensitivity to others, supportiveness, mercy, in short, all giving qualities. French (1985) states that because of the tremendous power of the feminine principle and the nature it epitomises, it is useful to

divide into two halves: the inlaw and outlaw aspects. 'Inlaw' women are required to display all the giving qualities (loving, maternal) in support of the masculine world but without being granted membership to that world. In contrast, 'outlaw' feminine qualities are seen as decadent: in essence, it embodies all that threatens masculine control. Based in sex, it involves an abandonment of control, hostility to 'masculine' structures related with the feminine principle, and everything in life that is irrepressible, capricious, and eternally dangerous. For the inlaw feminine aspect, sex is an expression of compliance for the sake of procreation. In the outlaw feminine construct, sex is a dominant drive toward another and a rejection of control (French, 1985: 80). Again, although French's work is dated, I use her dichotomy of inlaw/outlaw to examine whether participants in adhering to and promoting an ideal femininity, with a particular idealisation of feminine behaviour, dress and appearance leads to the exclusion of women who fail to meet the ideal.

The 'naturalness' of gender is relentlessly cited but masculinity and femininity are qualities of the body that requires effort. This idea is central for Judith Butler. Her work (1990; 1993; 1997) represents the third of Connell's (2002) influential approaches to the study of gender (gender as a discursive or symbolic system). Butler (1997) treats the idea of gender as a discursive system. The body is a 'bare scaffolding on which discourse and performance build a completely acculturated being' (Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 6). There is no basis to our gender identity according to Butler (1997) 'gender is constituted through a 'stylized repetition of acts'. It is these repetitions that engender difference. Through her theory of performativity, she posits that gender is contrived and has to be performed repetitiously in order to produce the effect of a gendered identity:

Gender proves to be performative - that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed . . . there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; . . . identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (Butler, 1990: 24-25).

In order to illustrate the artificial character of gender, Butler (1990; 1993) invokes the example of drag or female impersonation since drag disturbs the idea of the truth of an essential gender character. The performance of drag demonstrates a dissonance between sex and gender, gender and performance and sex and performance because the body of the performer is different from the gender of the performer. In short, drag is not a reflection of an imitation

of an original gendered identity but 'the myth of originality itself'. Butler (1990) states: 'the performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed . . . In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself - as well as its contingency' (Butler, 1990: 137). The parody of drag exposes the myth of originality, that is, drag is a parody of a parody. The drag persona disrupts not only concepts of masculinity and femininity but also the whole heterosexual matrix as it demonstrates the fluidity in which gender roles can be transposed to the other. She extends this argument to illustrate that all gender is imitative.

For Butler (1990), 'there is no distinction between sex and gender; the category of "sex" is itself a gendered category, fully politically invested, naturalized but not natural' (Butler, 1990: 112). I use Butler's theory of performativity to examine whether some female participants demonstrate a performance of their femininity. I relate Butler's theory on performativity to explore whether participants understood gender to be a set of repetitious and performed acts and behaviours, or is gender construction more meaningful and essential to the male/female character. The female body is also central to the definition and construction of femininity. The body provides femininity with a medium for expression and compulsion. As Bartky (1988) writes 'we are born male or female, but not masculine or feminine. Femininity is an artifice, an achievement, 'a mode of enacting and reenacting received gender norms which surface as so many styles of the flesh' (Bartky, 1988: 132). The feminine form acquires power through the female body. Bartky refers to a standardisation of 'normative femininity' which cultivates the idea that the ideal is the norm. Normative femininity is focused on the body's appearance and depends on women to self-regulate their bodies to conform to this ideal. To identify the condition of normalization dictated by the very acts essential to the performance of femininity. Bartky (1990) for instance characterises femininity as involving beauty, ornamentation and the regulation of the body. Again, femininity is based around something which women achieve. It involves questions of sexual allure or body adornment. Bartky's theory is interesting because it reveals the association between appearance, body and the creation of a standardised 'normative femininity'. How does her theory explain why Muslim women choose to wear the *hijab*? Is the *hijab* the antithesis of the desire of attaining an 'ideal' body size and configuration? Femininity is thus described as a performance or masquerade.

For Brownmiller (1986) femininity 'is a romantic sentiment, a nostalgic tradition of imposed limitations' (Brownmiller, 1986: 2). To be feminine requires effort. It necessitates a labour of



production not an expression of nature (Tyler, 2003). In contrast, men are not expected to go through a day to day routine to appear masculine (Holland et al., 1994). Indeed, Skeggs (2001) defines the appearance of femininity as 'the labour of looking feminine'. From the literature reviewed so far, appearance and the 'labour of production' (Skeggs, 2001) are central to the construction of femininity; this reinforces the idea that there is no authentic womanliness, only feminine performance (Tyler, 2003). Yet, at the same time, this emphasis creates the idea of femininity as a superficial construct, femininity lacks substance and significance. To what degree can we use the above theories to explain the experiences of Muslim women? 'Western' feminist theories are inadequate in describing the experiences and lives of the Muslim women I interviewed. One of the reason for this is that they view religion as a fundamental tool men use to dominate women. However, the work of Islamic feminists is essential to examine how Muslim feminists have merged feminist principles allowing for a 'patriarchal free' Islamic interpretation.

I also use Connell's (1987; 1995) theory that the social constructions of masculinity and femininity with reference to 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'emphasized femininity'. According to Connell (1987) at the level of mass social relations, forms of femininity are evident. The global subordination of women to men offers an important basis for differentiation. Connell refers to 'emphasized femininity' which is defined 'around compliance with [female] subordination and is oriented to accommodating the interest and desires of men' (Connell 1987: 183). It is constructed in a reciprocal and subordinated relationship to hegemonic masculinity in ways that support masculine power and male-dominated hierarchies within varying institutional settings. Emphasized femininity promotes an ideal of conduct and behaviour such as fragility, passivity, compliance with male desire, and sexual receptivity (Connell, 1987). It is not a cohesive culture, rather it develops from practices influenced within a variety of discourses such as beauty, motherhood or romance (Leahy, 1994). I use Connell's idea of 'emphasized femininity' to examine whether both male and female participants preclude the experiences of 'other' women, since the experiences of 'spinsters, lesbians, unionists, prostitutes, madwomen, rebels and maiden aunts, manual workers, midwives and witches' are excluded from emphasized femininity' (Connell, 1987: 188). Furthermore, femininity is related to male power and female subordination. Again, there is an explicit acknowledgment that femininity is negative and its construction is controlled by male power. Although, his theory is grounded in a White, non-Muslim perspective, Connell's (1987) work is essential to examine whether my

male participants understand and define femininity in order to strengthen their ideas about masculinity.

### 5.3.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF MOTHERHOOD IN THE 'WEST'

In the following section, I examine how motherhood is understood and constructed by 'Western' feminists, and whether the ideas and theories put forward relate to or are relevant to my research and my participants. Since motherhood is 'still considered to be a primary role for women' (Letherby, 2002: 7) and remains a central 'component of the discourse of femininity' (Walby, 1990: 106), it is essential to examine the role motherhood plays in the construction of femininity and feminine behaviour. For de Beauvoir, there is no such thing as a maternal instinct - it is a patriarchal invention which can infuse maternal guilt within women. Thus, 'patriarchy persists in the promotion of traditional constructions of feminine behaviour. At the heart of this is women's apparent proclivity to love: 'a requirement of femininity is that woman devote her life to love – to mother love, to romantic love, to religious love, to amorphous, undifferentiated caring' (Brownmiller, 1986:168).

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, feminists questioned the characterisation of women by their reproductive role and examined 'biology' as influenced by socially constructed meanings. For radical feminists like Firestone (1972), biological sex was the primary source of male oppression of females. She argued that women's biological ability to reproduce establishes a division of labour between men and women producing a 'sex class'. In order to support the biological family, reproductive roles are socially and politically enforced. Firestone (1972) felt that women's emancipation demanded a biological revolution whereby women were in control and determined the means of production by eradicating the sex class system. Others, such as Oakley (1979), argued that mother's are not born but made: women do not possess an inherent need to become mothers. Indeed, Chodorow (1978) argues that women's mothering is fundamental to the sexual division of labour. She writes that 'women's maternal role has profound effects on women's lives, on ideology about women, on the reproduction of masculinity and sexual inequality, and on the reproduction of particular forms of labour power. Women as mothers are pivotal actors in the sphere of social reproduction' (Chodorow, 1978: 11). Therefore, motherhood and the social construction of this concept has created an entire social organisation of gender inequality. In order for this inequality to change, men as well as women must become the primary carers for children.

In the social sciences, social constructionism has been used to describe and examine the role of mothering and motherhood. This role of motherhood is the result of social interactions and relationships not an innate desire to become mothers (Arendell, 1999). This idea ignores the very 'real' sense of the maternal instinct that some women feel they possess or develop as a result of having children. Moreover, it reduces their reproductive functions as merely involving societal expectations and customs. Using the discourse of social construction, motherhood is natural, but the role of mother, which develops over time, is socially constructed. Rich (1976) contends that through domestication, woman's power is diminished: 'in transfiguring and enslaving women, the womb – the ultimate source of this power – has historically been turned against us, and itself made into a source of powerlessness' (Rich, 1976: 68). Caring is at the centre of the world of women (Tarlow, 1996), yet, it does not provide women with power because patriarchal society does not grant women as mothers' power or privilege. Rather a woman is stripped of her power and agency: the feminine ideal encourages women's domestic and maternal responsibilities as natural, and encompasses this ideal as intuitive, empathetic and caring. I examine these views by looking at how Muslim scholars both traditional and modern characterises the role of mother. How do female participants, in particular, understand motherhood and mothering? Also, how does this impact on their understanding of their femininity and feminine identity?

#### 5.3.4 MARRIAGE IN THE 'WEST'

In this section, I review the literature on marriage in the 'West', which again has largely been undertaken by feminist theorists. Does their work relate to my own research and the data, which emerged from my interviews with Muslim male and female participants? According to Skeggs (2001), 'feminine is a category only known and brought into effect through its binary opposition to masculinity' (Skeggs, 2001: 302). This binary opposition is seen in the heterosexual marital union between man and woman. It involves and is constructed around monogamous, lifelong, cohabiting relationships, officially authorised, and producing children (Van Every, 1995). Marriage has been described as an institution and structure which is central to the oppression of 'Other's' in society, including women, lesbians and homosexual men (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2004). de Beauvoir, for example, acknowledged that there were sexual differences, that is, there are minor biological and physiological differences between women and men. However, she did not believe that these differences should determine or validate the subjugation of women in patriarchal society (Tidd, 2004). The dichotomised difference between husband and wife in marriage is characterised by opposition, polarisation,

hierarchy, and the devaluation of the wife. Adrienne Rich (1980) went further: she called on feminists to 'take the step of questioning heterosexuality' as a 'preference' or 'choice' for women (Rich, 1980: 50). She introduced the term 'compulsory heterosexuality' to challenge the idea that heterosexuality is a natural expression of human sexuality and that other forms of sexuality are abnormal. The institutionalisation of heterosexuality contributes to an institutionalised inequality of power manifest in heterosexual marriage. Rubin (1975) similarly argues that 'compulsory heterosexuality', marriage and the division of labour by gender are the basis for masculine dominance. Contemporary feminist literature continues to recount the inequalities intrinsic in heterosexual marriage. Marriage it appears preserves a prevailing symbolism 'of God, nature, tradition and procreation – which makes it deeply unappealing' (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2004: 141). How feasible is it to discuss the status and role of Muslim women and their construction of femininity based on 'Western' cultural norms and values? Given the very real differences between Muslims living in the 'West' and the larger White population; including religious beliefs, cultural and moral values and norms. I oppose the importing of 'Western' ideas and theories to explain the life experiences of a population diverse on many aspects (as mentioned above), especially since the 'West' understands the lives of Muslim women as being subject to oppressive rule and control. Nevertheless, feminist theories have been instrumental in the explanation of women's experience as mothers, wives and their role in marriage, therefore, where relevant, I employ feminist theories to explain Muslim women's position in the home, as mothers and wives. In the next two sections, I highlight how traditional and modernist Muslim scholars understand motherhood and marriage.

### 5.3.5 MOTHERHOOD IN ISLAM

What is at issue in 'Western' feminist understanding and thought, is not mothering as a physical fact but the social position and status accorded to motherhood. The distinction between the act of mothering and the status attached to it is a very important one that needs to be stated and analysed contextually. In the 'West', the mother is not accorded a high status (de Beauvoir, 1972; Firestone, 1972). However, Muslim scholars like Schleifer (1996) a female Muslim scholar who has studied and worked in the Middle East for over thirty years, believes that motherhood is a sacred status:

The mother in Islam is placed in a lofty position, that of the greatest respect . . . it involves her active participation in the affairs of her family. In Islam, there are two aspects of the characteristics of the mother: that which aligns itself to responsibility, and that which is attributed to natural, God-given qualities,

including both the physical exertion of childbirth, and the expression of positive emotion. These two aspects are not mutually exclusive, but rather supportive of each other, thus buttressing a state of equilibrium which is the desired atmosphere in the Muslim household. (Schleifer, 1996: 47)

The mother's respect is explicitly related to her active participation in family affairs, and thus firmly placed in the domestic realm with responsibilities to home and family. This is not limited to the act of giving birth, but the expression of emotions. The entire maternal process: pregnancy, childbirth, nursing and rearing, is grounded in a sense of spiritualness. The woman is offered an 'exclusive opportunity to obtain Allah's blessing and rewards, as the difficulty of pregnancy is a way which Allah has allotted only to the female sex' (Schleifer, 1996: 51). The qualities Schleifer (1996), associates with an ideal Muslim mother are affection, kindness, generosity and sacrifice. Her analysis concentrates on the intimate relationship between mother and child, she writes that 'a mother's affection for her children is considered a normal emotion and a blessing from Allah' (Schleifer, 1996: 47-48). Therefore, there is a strong natural bond that exists between mother and child. The eminent position of the mother in Islamic tradition is revealed in the emphasis placed on honouring the rights of 'womb relatives', as Murata (1992), a Japanese scholar who has studied Islamic theology, explains:

The Arabic word womb (*rahim*) is derived from the same root as the word mercy (*rahma*). . . *Rahma* is defined as mercy, pity, compassion, tenderness, the inclination to favor someone. It is the natural attribute of a mother toward the fruit of her womb. (Murata, 1992: 215).

This is contrary to much of the feminist literature which argues against the idealisation of women as mothers and posits that maternal instinct is not innate, but a patriarchal invention created by men to control and subjugate women (Rich, 1976; de Beauvoir, 1973). According to Rich (1976), the womb symbolises women's powerlessness, thus, despite being woman's ultimate source of power, the women's womb becomes a source of powerlessness. In contrast, according to Schleifer (1996), it is the woman's source of power, it provides her with an exalted vocation and position imbued with positive meaning. Moreover, it elicits a set of rewards based on her role as a mother. Equally for children, the 'concern and respect for the mother, specifically, is an expiator of sin and a clear way for the believer to become closer to Allah and to ward off the Fire' (Schleifer, 1996: 27). This is reflected in the often repeated *hadith* about the status of mothers in Islam, which states that 'paradise lies at the feet of

mothers<sup>1</sup>. Yet, there is no mention of the father's natural paternal role. Although the Qur'an recognises the pain and anguish women experience during childbirth<sup>2</sup>, it rewards and assigns women a superior position within the family. The following *hadith* provides a comparison between the position of the father and mother:

A man came to Allah's Apostle and said, "O Allah's Apostle! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?" The Prophet said, "Your mother". The man said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother". The man further said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother". The man asked for the fourth time "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your father"<sup>3</sup>.

The woman is rewarded for her physical, emotional or mental effort and struggle, in her role as a mother. Thus, the mother holds an esteemed and valuable position:

Islam views successful motherhood as the perfection of the Muslimah's religion – that there is no better or healthier substitute for a mother's affection and concern for her children, as expressed in nursing them and just being there when she is needed, especially in the period from infancy up to the onset of adulthood. The Islamic view is that everyone has his or her role in life with its accompanying responsibilities to others . . . equality exists within a structure of hierarchy. (Schleifer, 1996: 88).

Yet, for Wadud (1999) despite the clear association between the female and bearing children all other tasks related with child care and nurturing are not described in the Qur'an as essential female qualities. She postulates that the Qur'an only refers to the biological function of the mother, it does not speak about the emotional and cultural perception of 'mothering'. However, since the female's principal distinction is rooted in her childbearing ability, it is interpreted as her most important function. This has created the assumption and ideal that women can only be mothers and therefore, women are socialised to fulfil their biological duty to care for and rear children and be devoted wives and ideal mothers. However, Wadud (1999) argues that only childbearing is assigned to women not childcare or rearing. She remarks that although the Qur'an speaks about the biological role of mother 'there is no term in the Qur'an which indicates that childbearing is "primary" to a woman' (Wadud, 1999: 64). Moreover, childrearing and domestic chores are shared by both men and women in the Qur'an (Wadud, 1999: 91). Schleifer's (1996), characterisation of Islamic motherhood comes direct

---

<sup>1</sup> Sunan Ibn Majah, *Hadith* No. 2771

<sup>2</sup> Qur'an, 46:15.

<sup>3</sup> Bukhari, Book 73 Volume 008, *Hadith* Number 002.

from the *hadith* and *fiqh*, not the Qur'an. As Leo (2005) comments Schleifer 'finds nothing in the Qur'an to support her construct of woman as an important community member through her function in the family as mother based on her emotional nature' (Leo, 2005: 138).

### 5.3.6 MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

Are 'Western' sociological theories appropriate in defining and describing the lives of women as in the Qur'an and *hadith*? Islam and 'Western' feminist views differ on the purpose of marriage. The Qur'an describes marriage as the binding connection of two incomplete individuals: '... He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect. (Qur'an, 30: 21). Marriage in the Qur'an involves men and women complementing one another it is a union between two people. The Qur'an states: 'And of every thing We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction' (Qur'an, 51: 49). The very word used to describe the relationship between man and woman: 'pair'<sup>4</sup>, demonstrates that the existence of such a pair is dependent upon the union of the couple (Wadud, 1999). In other words, 'when something was created as one of a pair, it is clearly incomplete without the other' (Murata, 1992: 171). At the heart of marriage is an emotional, financial, and psychological bond between two people. Men and women are described as garments: they are your garments and ye are their garments' (Qur'an, 2:187). Marriage involves becoming the *awliya* (protector/supporters) of one another. The mutual contract of marriage in the Qur'an also provides a legitimate vehicle for sexual relations. Sex is natural when engaged in the appropriate context of marriage. Indeed, the sexual act between husband and wife is an act of *sadaqa* (charity):

God's Messenger said: "In the sexual act of each of you there is a *sadaqa*". The Companions replied: "O Messenger of God! When one of us fulfils his sexual desire, will he be given a reward for that?" And he said, "Do you not think that were he to act upon it unlawfully, he would be sinning? Likewise, if he acts upon it lawfully he will be rewarded" (Muslim, cited in Maqsood: 1995: 84).

Marriage (*nikah*), in Islam is rooted in a discourse of monogamy (although polygamy is permissible with certain conditions); it is a formal and sacred social contract between man and woman. By mutually agreeing to enter into marriage, both husband and wife possess the power to define terms and conditions according to their preference and including them as

---

<sup>4</sup> Similar verses appear in various chapters of the Qur'an: 13:3; 36:36; 42:11; 51:49; 78:8.

elements of the marriage contract (Murata, 1992). Indeed, Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: 'you have obligations towards your wives and your wives have obligations towards you'<sup>5</sup>. According to Roald (2001), this *hadith* gives the impression of a relationship of equal rights and obligations from both the man and the woman. Humans as social beings must abide by strictly defined gender roles, these roles are not socially constructed but established by Allah (Murata, 1992). Therefore, we find that Islam sets 'up a social order from the outset . . . the social order demands rules and regulations' (Murata, 1992: 79). Al-Jibaly (2000) comments that when we consider men and woman in the Qur'an and *hadith*, we have to recognise that it does not equate two persons who are intrinsically different. The advantages are rooted in the difference in their capabilities of performing certain tasks. He concludes by stating that it is a matter fairness not equality. It is argued that Allah has designed each half of the pair [male/female] to complement the other physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually (Maqsood, 1995: 67). According to the *Shafi* and *Maliki* school of thought, if a husband fails to provide maintenance for two years his wife is permitted to dissolve the marriage (Doi, 1989). The idea of female care and protection is rooted in the Prophet's last *khutba* (sermon), which presents gender-based instructions for appropriate male/female behaviour. It positions men as the carers of women:

Lo! Take good care of women, for they surely are captives under you, and you do not possess of them any more than that . . . Lo! You have rights on your women, and your women have rights on you . . . And their right upon you is that you be good to them in terms of their clothing and food. (cited in Doi, 1989: 42)

In his last sermon, Prophet Muhammad stressed that Muslim men should be good and kind toward their wives. Men are instructed to show kindness, tenderness, consideration towards women in general and wives in particular. Nevertheless, women have not been instructed to be kind to their husbands, this idea lends itself to the view that all women possess a natural ability to be kind and caring. It is an essential element of their feminine nature. However, looking at how traditional and modern scholars understand motherhood and marriage, presents only a partial view. In the next section, I will examine in more detail how traditional and modern scholars interpret women's position in Islam.

---

<sup>5</sup> Sunan: At-Tirmidhi, Book of Foster Relationship, No. 1083.



#### 5.4 WOMEN'S POSITION PRIOR TO THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

In this section, I examine the basic beliefs concerning the position of women and gender in the Qur'an. In order to do this, it is essential that we examine the socio-cultural and historical context of its revelation. Prior to Islam a period of 'ignorance' (*Jāhiliya*) prevailed, a time of moral and social decadence and degeneracy, of idolatry and in particular of discriminatory practices against women. Women were denied a religious and social status, exemplified in the practice of female infanticide (baby girls were buried alive) (Qur'an, 16:58-59). The Qur'an explicitly condemned the practice of female infanticide and remonstrated the perpetrators who will be asked to justify their crime on the Day of Judgement (Qur'an, 81: 8-9). Prior to Islam, women were also suppressed by their kinsmen or their husband's. They were considered a commodity to be possessed, bought, sold or inherited. Islam effectively ended this practice (Qur'an 4:19). In addition to prohibiting men from inheriting women, the Qur'an introduced sweeping changes to the social and economic lives of women. Also during the period of *Jāhiliya* there was unrestricted polygamy, tribal leaders and chiefs had many wives in order to build relationships with other families: Islam, however, ended this practice (Qur'an, 4: 3). The number of wives permissible for Muslim men was restricted to four. As a consequence of the battles<sup>6</sup> that took place during the territorial expansion of Islam, countless women became widows. Polygamy was permitted as a solution to this problem: men were able to provide security and protection to otherwise abandoned women and orphaned children. Polygamy was neither encouraged nor obligatory: it was simply permitted but with attached responsibility. Polygamy in Islam is permitted under certain circumstances: if the wife is barren and the husband desires to have children of his own; if his wife is not capable of performing her duties as a wife due serious illness; and social necessity (widows created because of war etc.) (Jawad, 1998). The Qur'an states and recognises the difficulty of a man to deal with his wives in an equal and just manner and recommends therefore that if he is unable to do so, he should marry only once (Qur'an, 4:129).

There is debate and disagreement amongst Islamic and modernist scholars about whether the Qur'an heralded a new era of empowerment for women (Roald, 2001). Ahmed (1992), for instance, has argued that prior to Islam women were in positions of power, the matrilineal system that was common in pre-Islam Arabia granted women greater freedom to divorce and a degree of economic independence and social prominence (Keddie, 1990). Leila Ahmed

---

<sup>6</sup> The verse was revealed after the Battle of Uhud in which many Muslim men were killed leaving behind widows and orphans, therefore, the primary purpose was to protect and care for the orphans and the widows left behind.

(1992) states that the ethical field of Islam promoted an egalitarian message, however, this egalitarian vision was 'in tension with . . . the hierarchical structure of marriage pragmatically instituted in the first Islamic society' (Ahmed, 1992: 63). She argues that the pragmatic aspect took precedence over the ethical aspect thereby transforming a somewhat egalitarian society into to one a purely male controlled society (Ahmed, 1992 cited in Roald, 2001: 109).

Eposito (1982), however, argues that the rights granted to women with the advent of Islam were instrumental and progressive, improving their position in society and in the home. He goes on further to state that the Qur'an's commandments on marriage, divorce and inheritance did improve women's position. Qur'anic reforms included outlawing female infanticide, women becoming legal partners in the marriage contract and being the recipients of male dowry. Unrestricted polygamy was ended with the prerequisite of the husband being equal and just to all wives. Divorce also changed, with the introduction of a waiting period (*idda*) which allowed for the possibility of a reconciliation and to protect unborn children. Women also gained in terms of their right to inheritance, as well as being in control of their own property (Eposito, 1982). Keddie (1990) has focussed on these 'revolutionary' changes more critically. She remarks that we know little about the practices of tribes before the advent Islam, therefore, we are unable to make claims of the changes being radical. Moreover, Qur'anic injunctions that allow men to freely divorce but make it difficult for women to do so were not to their advantage. Also, there were important class and regional differences amongst Muslim women, which 'existed in women's role according to time, place and social status. There has never been a single category of Muslim women operating under one set of rules' (Keddie, 1990: 84).

#### 5.4.1 WOMEN'S 'NEW' POSITION IN ISLAM

The advent of Islam gave women the right to an education, property, inheritance, and economic independence. Islam therefore brought a liberating and emancipatory message not only for men but also for women. According to Barlas (2002), men and women are from the same nature, they make up two halves of a single pair they are 'ontologically the same, hence equal' (Barlas, 2002: 134). Both possess the same potential in their spiritual life. Neither is excluded in the principal purpose of the Qur'an, which is to guide humankind towards recognition of and belief in Allah's truths. The Qur'an relates that the woman is equal to man in rights and duties, and are to be rewarded or punished for their actions and pious efforts:

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward (Qur'an, 22: 35).

Indeed, to assign a particular quality and limit that characteristic to one gender over another opposes the equity recognised throughout the Qur'an (Wadud, 1999). This verse, Barlas states, indicates that 'it is on the basis of their moral praxis, rather than their biological sex, that human beings will be judged and they will be judged by exactly the same standards' (Barlas, 2004: 8-9). The criteria of equality is in piety and *taqwa* (fear of Allah). As the Qur'an states: '... Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)' (Qur'an, 49:13). According to Schimmel (1992), the term 'garment' in ancient religions was used to refer to the alter ego of a human being. She goes on to comment that 'the garment can function as a substitute for the person, and with a new garment one gains as if it were a new personality' (Schimmel, 1992: ix). The spouses have therefore been granted equal rights. Yet, a man has a 'slight edge' (Engineer, 2004), or is 'degree above' woman (Da Costa, 2002; Murata, 1992). This is illustrated in the following verse:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all). (Qur'an, 4:34)

This verse is frequently cited to justify gender hierarchies by traditional male Muslims scholars. Indeed, 'hierarchy is not bad, since it is built into reality. To deny that is to be blind' (Murata, 1992: 322). According to Doi (1989), a traditional Indian Muslim scholar, the verse positions men to be the *qawwamūn* (that is, protectors and maintainers in relation to women). The word *qawwamūn* connotes a person who assumes the responsibility of protecting the interests of another person. Indeed, for Doi (1989), because of the males' superior physical strength and ability to undertake laborious work, men are, in general, more suitable and qualified to become the *qawwamūn*. Hence, in the domestic division of labour, the husband, because of

his strength and through the maintenance of his wife, is allocated a position 'above' her. The man represents the active principle and the woman the receptive principle (Maududi, 1972). The word *qanitat* is used to describe 'righteous women' and is assumed to mean 'obedient to husband' (Wadud, 1999). Therefore, the 'righteous' women in the view of Allah are those who are obedient to their husbands. A woman is described as *muhsana*: she acts as a defence against Satan. Through marriage, the woman helps keep him on the path of righteousness (Doi, 1989). Yet, at the same time, these scholars are careful to point to the *hadith*, which states 'that there is no obedience in disobedience to Allah', arguing that the woman is not expected to obey her husband if this involves disobedience towards Allah (Al-Khattab, 1998; Doi, 1989).

Passage 4:34 in the Qur'an includes a section which describes methods to remonstrate women. According to Al-Khattab (1998), a White female Muslim convert, *nushūz* is variously interpreted as defiance, arrogance, rebellion, disobedience; open lewdness and obscenity and/or infidelity, adultery. Although these behaviours and attitudes are forbidden for both female and males, in the case of a wife's misconduct a 'light beating' is regarded as a last resort. The verse (4:34) outlines a series of steps to be taken. The foregoing verse prescribes certain measures which should be taken in settling disputes which might arise between a married couple. First, the husband should admonish his wife in a polite manner. If this proves effective, there is no need to resort to a stronger measure. Second, he can suspend conjugal relations: the husband may refuse to share his bed with his wife. This must be confined to a reasonable period of time and should not be continued indefinitely. Third, he can use 'light beating'<sup>7</sup>. Qaradawi also uses the interpretation: 'beat them (lightly)'. He further comments that the man as the head of the house is 'entitled to the obedience and cooperation of his wife', and therefore, 'it is not allowed for the wife to rebel against his authority'. Thus, if the husband feels that his wife is disobedient or rebellious, then one of the last resorts is that it is 'permissible for him to admonish her lightly with his hands, avoiding her face and other sensitive areas. In no case should he resort to using a stick or any other instrument which might cause pain and injury'<sup>8</sup>. Thus, Muslim jurists have generally discouraged Muslims from beating their wives. However, if a wife's behaviour is against the commandments of Allah and the injunction of the Prophet, chastising her or beating her in a light manner may become

---

<sup>7</sup> This is according to Yusuf Ali's translation, which differs from Plkhtall who uses the word 'scourge'.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.islamonline.net/serivet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask\\_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503543230](http://www.islamonline.net/serivet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503543230)

necessary (Doi, 1989). According to the understanding that a woman is created from a man's rib, this further solidifies the idea of sexual difference:

Allah's Apostle said: "treat women nicely, for a women is created from a rib, and the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion, so, if you should try to straighten it, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So treat women nicely"<sup>9</sup>.

This creates the idea of the woman as having a 'fragile nature, both physically and emotionally. Understanding this enables the man to treat her with consideration and compassion' (al-Jibaly, 2000: 40-41; cf. Doi, 1989) this *hadith* has been cited to support the view that men should be kind to women and leave her in that state. If the woman is weak and is perceived in relation to the man, then the man is inevitably stronger. Riffat Hassan (1987), a Pakistani Islamic feminist who resides in America has given extensive consideration to the above *hadith*. She states that the idea of women being created from a rib is at the heart of men's apparent superiority to women. Yet, there are no specific references in the Qur'an corresponding to this idea, in actuality there is no mention of Hawwa (Eve) in the Qur'an. Hassan (1987) adds that in the passages in the Qur'an, where reference is made to Allah's creation of humans as sexually distinct, superiority is not assigned to either the man or woman. She therefore questions that if the Qur'an does not differentiate between the creation of man and woman, then where does the idea of Hawwa (Eve) being created from the rib of Adam emerge from? She responds by saying that 'it is much more likely that it became a part of Muslim heritage through its assimilation in *hadith* literature, which has been in many ways the lens through which the Qur'an has been seen since the early centuries of Islam'.

Barlas (2002) support Hassan's argument and contends that the account of the rib is more familiar to Biblical tradition (cf. Genesis 2: 18-24) and is not reflected or supported by the Qur'an. There is no single verse in the Qur'an which states that man and woman were created from different substances, or that woman was created of man's rib, or even that woman was created after man. According to the Qur'an, all human beings derive from a single source. In the Qur'an, in 'none of the thirty or so passages which describe the creation of humanity . . . is there any statement which could be interpreted as asserting or suggesting that man was created prior to woman or that woman was created from man' (Hassan, 1999, cited in Barlas,

---

<sup>9</sup> Bukhari, Volume, 4, Book 55 (Prophets) *Hadith* Number 548, and in Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 62 (Wedlock, Marriage) *Hadith* Number 113 & 114.

2002: 135). Stowasser (1994), however, argues that that the Prophet was not faulting woman in this *hadith*, rather he was defining women's natural temperament and the prevalence of emotions over rationality. Indeed, this is the crux of the difference between men and women: for men, there is a prevalence of rationality over emotions. Neither man nor woman is inferior to the other. The 'crookedness' in the *hadith* does not entail immorality or a defect in woman's nature, rather, the woman's crookedness empowers her to perform the task of caring for children who require love, sympathy, compassion, but not rationality. According to Stowasser (1994), the words 'the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion' indicates woman's compassion to her child and the ascendancy of emotion over her rational mind. According to this understanding, the woman's 'crookedness' has become a laudatory attribute for the woman, because this 'crookedness' is in reality woman's 'straightest' qualification for her task' (Stowasser, 1994: 37).

There is also controversy and considerable debate concerning the interpretation of verse 4:34. Wadud (1999), points out that the Qur'an acknowledges the anatomical difference between male and females. It also recognises that men and women function in a manner which reproduces their biological differences. Thus, the Qur'an recognises culturally determined functional differences between male and females. Difference in the Qur'an is not conceptualised as inequality because the Qur'an does not advocate that men and women are unequal or incompatible. Moreover, the Qur'an does not attempt to eradicate the differences between the sexes or to remove the importance of functional gender distinctions which help every society to run harmoniously. Indeed, 'compatible mutually supportive functional relationships between men and women can be seen as part of the goal of the Qur'an' (Wadud, 1999: 8). In spite of this, Wadud (1999) claims that the Qur'an does not recommend or approve a singular role or a particular definition of a set of roles for men and women across every culture. What is central, however, is the way male scholars have interpreted what the Qur'an says. According to Barlas (2004), Muslim understanding of three/four words<sup>10</sup> in the Qur'an (4:34) determine and establish the view that Allah has created men ontologically superior to women: by a single degree (*darajah*) preferred (*faddala*) them to women, put them in charge (*qawwamūn*) of women, and permitted them to beat (*daraba*) disobedient wives. In explicating the verse in question, Wadud (1999) declares that the following verse is typically viewed as extremely important in terms of the relationship between men and women:

---

<sup>10</sup> *Darajah*; *faddala*; *qawwamūn*; and *daraba*.

Women who are divorced shall wait, keeping themselves apart, three (monthly) courses. It is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah hath created in their wombs if they are believers in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands would do better to take them back in that case if they desire a reconciliation. And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness [*ma'ruf*], and men are a degree above them. Allah is Mighty, Wise. (Qur'an, 2: 228)

The verse has been interpreted (al-Jibaly, 2000; Doi, 1989; Maududi, 1972) to mean that a step or degree (*daraba*) prevails between all men and all women in every context. Yet, this is in the context of divorce. Wadud (1999) argues that the Qur'an confines this male advantage in the man's freedom to enunciate divorce against his wives without adjudication or assistance. For Al Munajjed (1997), the verse indicates that the sexes benefit from equality in law. However, the distinction in nature and economic position between men and women makes men's rights and liabilities slightly greater than women's. The term *ma'ruf* is translated by Pickthall to mean 'kindness'. In relation to treatment of woman, it may also be used to describe beneficial, courteous and equitable. Wadud (1999) indicates that this precedes the *darajah* statement and serves as an indication that men and women share the same rights and responsibilities. *Darajah* must therefore be earned by performing certain actions. The term used to describe preference: *faddala*, is given by Allah. For instance, the Qur'an provides examples whereby Allah has preferred some over others (first humankind over the rest of creation, some Prophets over other Prophets and some groups of people over others) (Wadud, 1999: 69). This *faddala* is bestowed and granted by Allah. Wadud asserts that men are only *qawwamūna'alā* when two specific conditions stipulated in the verse are met. The first condition is 'preference' (*faddala*) and the second is that men support the women from their means, but 'if either condition fails, then the man is not 'qawwam' over that woman' (Wadud, 1999: 70). She continues by stating that the verse states the relationship between men and women is placed on 'what' Allah has preferred. This preference is limited only to material provision there is only one Qur'anic reference which specifies that Allah has determined for men a 'portion greater than for women: inheritance. The share for a male is twice that for the female' (Qur'an, 4:7) within a single family.

This preference, however, is not absolute. The verse does not provide, according to Wadud (1999), a universal model or example that 'men are preferred over women'. Rather it reads: some of them (men) over others, thus 'all men do not excel over all women in all manners... So, whatever Allah has preferred it is still not absolute' (Wadud, 1999: 71). Wadud suggests

that the verse is concerned with the marital relationship, she argues that previous verses discuss conditions of relations between male members of society and female members of society. For Wadud (1999), the principal message of the verse is the responsibility and right of women to bear children. This responsibility demands stamina, intelligence and physical strength. In order to ensure that the woman is not over burdened, the man due to the balance and justice in creation is *qiwamah*, providing the woman is given everything that she requires to fulfil her main responsibility of child-rearing, including material sustenance and physical protection. The passage relating to 'good' (Qur'an 4:34) for Wadud involves a method to resolve disharmony between husband and wife. She argues that the word *qanitat* has been incorrectly translated to mean 'obedient'. The word is used both for males and females; it depicts qualities or personality traits of believers towards Allah, co-operation towards one another and obedience to Allah. The term *nushūz* refers to a state of disorder between a married couple. Again, the word *nushūz* is not only applied to females but also to males<sup>11</sup>. In verse 4:128, the disharmony involves the husband who treats his wife cruelly, but in verse 4:34, the source of the disorder is the female. Yet, when used to describe the wife, the word is often defined as 'disobedience to the husband'. Wadud states that 'the Qur'an never orders a woman to obey her husband, it never states that obedience to husbands is a characteristic of the 'better women' (Wadud, 1999: 77). To limit and apply the term to only women ignores the fact that the Qur'an uses the term (*nushūz*) for both males and females. In order to resolve the disorder within marriage, the Qur'an offers three solutions (as is evident in the verse): a verbal solution, separation and the 'scourge' is permitted. While Pickthall uses the harsher term 'scourge' (which Wadud applies), Ali chooses to use 'beat them (lightly)'. Even if the couple reaches the third solution, the type of 'scourge' cannot be so harsh as to create marital violence as it would be deemed 'un-Islamic'.

Wadud (1999), comments that we cannot disregard the fact that the verse states in its third suggestion the term *daraba*, to strike. Indeed, reference to *daraba* for some Muslims, meant an authorisation for wife beating. Wadud explains that *daraba* is also used in the Qur'an as an example (Allah gives or sets as an example), and is different from *darraba*, which means to 'strike repeatedly or intensely'. As a result, the verse should be read 'as prohibiting unchecked violence against females. Thus, this is not permission, but a severe restriction of existing practices' (Wadud, 1999: 76). We can also infer that the Qur'an applies *daraba* in a restricted

<sup>11</sup> If a wife fears cruelty or desertion (*nushūz*) on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if ye do good and practise self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (Qur'an, 4:128)



rather than a regulatory sense by exploring the historical context of this teaching (Barlas, 2002). This verse does not grant men the permission to abuse women. Rather in a context where men were unrestrained in their abuse towards women, the verse served as a restriction to the degree that the Qur'an made *daraba* the last resort. If the Qur'an meant to 'restrict abuse even during those most abusive of times, there is no reason to regard this ayah as an authorisation at a time when we claim to have become more, not less civilised' (Barlas, 2002: 188).

Wadud also argues that men who strike their wives to harm them are not creating harmony: they are not following the Qur'an's prescribed method for restoring marital harmony. Therefore, they cannot refer to verse 4:34 to validate their actions. Wadud poses a series of questions regarding 'many of today's realities' (overpopulation, inefficient single income, barren women) which may not find a solution in the verse 4:34. She concludes by stating that 'the Qur'an must eternally be reviewed with regard to human exchange and mutual responsibility between males and females. This verse establishes an ideal obligation for men with regard to women to create a balanced and shared society. This responsibility is neither biological nor inherent, but it is valuable' (Wadud, 1999: 73). According to Engineer (1999), a number of Pakistani scholars have interpreted the term that using various interpretation of the issue about 'beating' the woman. For instance Muhammad Ali uses the term 'admonish them, and leave them alone in the beds and chastise them'. Muhammad Asad translates it as 'admonish them (first); then leave them alone in bed; and then beat them'. However, Ahmed Ali translates it as 'go to bed with them' because he uses the word '*Daraba 'ala*' according to al-Raghib a prominent lexicographer of the Qur'an, who uses the term to refer to a male camel mounting a female camel and therefore, Ahmed Ali translates it as 'going to bed' rather than beating the wife (Engineer, 1999: 55-56). Therefore, we must acknowledge that there are various interpretations of the terms in the verse. Barlas (2002), further argues that 'the Qur'an does not 'define women and men in terms of binary oppositions', (Barlas, 2002: 129), rather, it treats 'women and men differently with respect to some issues' but 'does not advocate the concept of sexual differentiation or inequality (a Self/Other binary) (Barlas, 2002: 133). In her examination of verse 4:34, she states that Yusuf Ali's translation, in his use of the term 'strength', alters a ruling about social duties into a declaration about male biology and ontology. She argues that scholars who interpret these verses to imply sexual inequality and husband privilege misread both verses (4:34 and 2:228). One has to adopt a socio-theological view. Even a revealed scripture comprises both the contextual and the normative. No

scripture, in order to be effective, can totally ignore the context' (Engineer, 2004: 52). Therefore, we see that there are important differences in translation of words such as '*qawwam*', '*qanitat*' and '*nushūz*' (Engineer, 2004).

## 5.5 FEMALE/MALE WITNESSES

The issue of female witnesses in the Qur'an is an issue of great discussion. The ruling of two female witnesses for one male witness has been used as a declaration of the weakness of women and thus a way to accentuate the innate differences between men and women's temperament:

When ye contract a debt for a fixed term, record it in writing', 'And call to witness, from among your men, two witnesses. And if two men be not (at hand) then a man and two women, of such as ye approve as witnesses, so that if the one erreth (through forgetfulness) the other will remember'. (Qur'an, 2: 282)

Rafai (1992) is careful to point out that the intellect of the Muslim woman is not undermined or degraded by the commandment that if two Muslim male witnesses are not present then one Muslim man and two Muslim women should be witnesses. However, he states that because women are unfamiliar with business procedures and are more occupied with the domestic sphere, they are more prone to make mistakes. Therefore, 'a woman's involvement in her household may cause her to forget outside responsibilities so she may need another woman to remind her' (Rafai, 1992, cited in Khan 1993: ii). Yet, both Barlas (2002) and Wadud (1999) assert that the Qur'an makes no reference implicitly or explicitly to the woman as being 'weaker' nor are men described as being 'stronger'. Elfawal (2003) claims that this disparity is rooted in the idea that women are more emotional, and being a witness can cause greater mental stress for her than for the male. This stress is exacerbated during menstruation, pregnancy, following delivery and at menopause, and it is believed that these aspects may taint the woman's testimony, they can endure 'extraordinary psychological strains giving rise to depression, lack of concentration, slow mindedness and short term memory loss' (Khan, 1993: 6). These factors thus hinder woman and support the ruling which apparently purports two female witness for one male witness. These views inscribe on the female body a deficient, intellectual and moral capacity with apparent biological 'evidence' to support these presuppositions. Wadud (1999) however, comments that two women are not called as witnesses, instead, one woman is assigned to 'remind' the other. Their functions are distinct if one errs deliberately or inadvertently then the other is able to correct her. In addition,

keeping in mind that women could be compelled to repudiate their testimony, with two women they are able to mutually support the other. Indeed, 'the single unit which comprises two women with distinct functions not only gives each woman significant individual worth, but also forms a united front against the other witness' (Wadud, 1999: 86). Therefore, the ruling does not produce a 'two-for-one' principle because the Qur'an does not stipulate four female witnesses to replace two male witnesses. In addition, the verse specifies certain types of financial contracts, the call for two women and one man for witnessing financial contracts is not a general rule for women's participation, nor even for all witnessing.

#### 5.5.1 DEFICIENT IN INTELLIGENCE

Menstruation in the Qur'an is not a marker of women's defectiveness; the Qur'an adopts a purely biological view of menstruation: it embraces the differences between men and women, and in turn accommodates these differences in praying, fasting and sexual relations. However, there are certain restrictions for both the male and female and more specifically on the female that concerns menstruation. It is forbidden for a Muslim man to have sexual intercourse with his wife when she is menstruating<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, the following *hadith* discusses woman's deficiency and relations directly to woman's biological nature:

Once Allah's Apostle went out to the Musalla (to offer the prayer) on 'Id-al-Adha or Al-Fitr prayer. Then he passed by the women and said, 'O women! Give alms, as I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-fire were you (women)'. They asked, 'Why is it so, O Allah's Apostle?' He replied, 'You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you. A cautious sensible man could be led astray by some of you.' The women asked, 'O Allah's Apostle! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?' He said, 'Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?' They replied in the affirmative. He said, 'This is the deficiency in her intelligence. Isn't it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during her menses?' The women replied in the affirmative. He said, 'This is the deficiency in her religion'<sup>13</sup>.

Badawi, an Egyptian scholar who resides in Canada, maintains the Prophet's intention was not to pass judgment on women's spirituality, but instead to persuade them to compensate for these disadvantages by working harder on their faith. He claims that the condition in the Qur'an that women must not pray or fast during her menstruation, is a compassionate allowance, which offers exemption from religious demands. Instead, Badawi states that

---

<sup>12</sup> Qur'an, 2: 222.

<sup>13</sup> Bukhari, Book 6, *Hadith* Number 301.

women when they are menstruating should offer private prayers. Yet, according to Roald (2001) this *hadith* is particularly cited by Arabic speaking Muslims, she states that 'the fact that this *hadith* is so widespread might be due to the fact that its content confirms patriarchal attitudes already present in the Arab cultural context, since the ideas it represents are just as pervasive among the non-Muslim Arab population as it is among Muslim Arabs' (Roald, 2001: 131-132)

## 5.6 INHERITANCE

Prior to the Qur'anic injunction, women had little or no right to either inherit from her father's or husband's property or any other relative's property (Engineer, 2004). Rather, they were themselves given as if they were property to be allotted at the death of a husband, father, or brother. The Qur'an removed all uncertainties and fixed a share of inheritance for women which: 'from what is left by parents and those nearest related there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large,-a determinate share' (Qur'an, 4:7). The proscription that a male relative receives a share equal 'to that of two females' refers only to the inheritance of children by their parents. The principle behind a brother receiving twice his sister's share, is grounded on the Islamic view that the man is obligated to provide and support his wife (cf. Qur'an, 4: 34). According to Ansari (1989), this is not related to the inferiority of women, rather because the female 'has not been entrusted with any financial obligations towards anyone, including her husband and children; indeed, not even herself. Thus, receiving half of the male's share remains for her a distinct advantage, rather than a loss' (Ansari, 1989, cited in Da Costa, 2003: 22). The woman's wealth is her own (Qur'an, 4: 32). She is not obligated to share it with anyone, not even the husband. Yet, 'if she spends on herself or her immediate family (husband and children) from her personal wealth, it is considered a debt that the husband has to repay' (Ali, 2003: 82). In contrast, the husband's wealth is not his own. Thus, 'there is reciprocity between privileges and responsibilities. Men have the responsibility of paying out of their wealth for the support of women, and they are consequently granted a double share of inheritance' (Wadud, 1999: 70-71)

### 5.6.1 DIVORCE

During *Jāhiliyya* men had an absolute right over women in matters of divorce, providing no maintenance (Engineer, 2004), men possessed the power to divorce their wives and were not bound by any legal sanctions (Doi, 1989). However, Islam recognises that discordance may arise within marriage and thus permits divorce to be initiated by either husband/wife in

circumstances where the continuation of marriage becomes unbearable for either spouse. The Prophet declared that from all the permitted actions, divorce is the most abhorrent before Allah (Doi, 1989). In the Qur'an, Allah provides general guidelines for divorce proceedings, with an emphasis on both parties preserving the values of justice and kindness in ratifying the end of their marriage<sup>14</sup>. *Talaq* (the term used by Muslim to refer to divorce) works as follows: if a marriage is struggling, the husband may make a single declaration of divorce, as long as certain important conditions are met (Al-Khattab, 1998). Thus, unlike women, men may pronounce: 'I divorce you' to initiate the divorce process (Wadud, 1999). It is noteworthy, however, that the Qur'an does not permit that men be granted an unrestrained power of repudiation.

Although, Wadud (1999), points out that men possess this power, the Qur'an assigns conditions and responsibilities. Because there is no mention of women renouncing their husbands, this has led Muslims to believe that they do not possess the power to do so. What is important Wadud argues, is reciprocal and harmonious reconciliation or separation. However, if arbitration fails then the *Idda*, or waiting period then begins, the length of which is defined as being three menstrual cycles (Qur'an 2: 228). The principle behind this is to ascertain whether the wife is pregnant; if she is, the *Idda* lasts until delivery. If the woman, however, has passed menopause the waiting period (*Idda*) is four months and ten days (Qur'an, 2: 234). During the *Idda*, the woman must remain in her marital home and the husband is commanded to provide for her (financially, food, cf. Qur'an, 65: 6), with the expectation that resolution may occur. If the wife requests a divorce and the husband refuses, the woman has the right and option to instigate the divorce herself. This is known as *Khul*. Through the *khul* she may free herself from a marriage, but she must surrender all or part of her dowry (Al-Khattab, 1998: 25). Therefore, Islam circumscribes the right of both parties to divorce with certain restrictions. Moreover, both divorced women (Qur'an, 2:232), and widows (Qur'an, 11: 235), are granted the right to remarry. Despite being divorced the woman is not left impoverished (Qur'an, 2:241). In the next section, I examine the issue of the *hijab*, how women's body is viewed and examine traditional and modernist interpretation of the *hijab*.

## 5.7 THE DEBATE ABOUT THE *HIJAB*

In the following section, I examine the issue of the *hijab* in traditional and modern Muslim discourse. Since 'the most prominent justifications for veiling entail, quite simply, the idea that

---

<sup>14</sup> Qur'an, 65: 1-6.

veiling is prescribed in the Qur'an' (Read & Bartkowski, 2000: 399), it is essential to examine female modesty through the *hijab*. In addition to this, I examine the social and political reasons why women in some Muslim countries and in the 'West' adopt the *hijab*.

#### 5.7.1 FEMALE COVERING AND TERMINOLOGY

Contemporary Muslim female modest dress consists of (a) a head-cover (*khimār*) and (b) a gown or cloak (*jilbāb*). In its entirety, the *khimār* is a 'head cover that covers the hair, and falls down over the chest and back'. While the *jilbāb* is 'an unfitted, long-sleeved, ankle-length gown'. The term for face covering cloth is *niqāb* (Shadid & Van Koningsveld, 2005: 36). Lane (1984) points out that there are several meanings of the term *hijab* 'a thing that prevents . . .; a thing that veils . . . or protects, because it prevents seeing . . . The *hijab* also means a partition' (Lane (1984, cited in Ruby, 2006: 55). The terms veil and *hijab* are often used interchangeably, yet, the *hijab* has an Islamic association that distinguishes it from the veil (Ruby, 2005). Moreover, El Guindi (1999) notes that in Arabic no term for veiling exists. The veil, which is often perceived in the 'West' as a head covering, does not reveal the intricacies of the practice in the Muslim context. The term also involves the women's behaviour/attitude, and studies have found that a vital feature of the *hijab* is modest behaviour (Ruby, 2006: 58). Thus, it symbolises a multitude of meanings: it represents pride in Islam, freedom from social pressures, independence to enter the public sphere and allows women to dictate perceptions of themselves. I make reference to the term *hijab* because it denotes the covering of the head, it was also the term used most frequently by my male and female participants. However, I use the terms used by writers in their work (*hijab*, headscarf, veil and so on).

#### 5.7.2 THE FEMALE BODY

The human body is considered as a cause of shame, and therefore must be hidden and covered. According to Khuri (2001), a prominent Lebanese academic, this view relates back to Adam and Eve. Modesty and chastity are coveted and sacred aspects of one's personality and character. Khuri (2001), points out that the term *farj*, for which there is no equivalent English word, may be used to denote genitalia and nakedness, or between the navel and the knee. It may also be used to refer to the entire naked body. He notes, that every *farj* mentioned in the Qur'an 'is always preceded by the qualifying verbs to guard, to fortress and to protect' (Khuri, 2001: 37). The words, genitalia, body, nakedness, adornment, and shamefulness, contain symbolically and behaviourally the same definition and are subject to guarding and protection. For men, the source of their shamefulness relates to that part of the body between the navel

and the knee (genitalia). For women, however, shamefulness covers her entire body (Khuri, 2001). Therefore, a woman's entire body is imbued with sexuality: their bodies; their bodily movements; and the style, shape and colour of their clothing are able to instigate male sexual arousal, because women are at the same time more modest and more exhibitionist (Tseëlon, 1995). Consequently, women are held responsible not only for their self-honour, but they become the guardians of male honour (Mohammad, 1999). The woman thus 'acts as a symptom: she represents a threat while being constructed as a defence against that threat' (Tseëlon, 1995: 24). Proponents of the veil highlight the distinctive masculine proclivity for untamed sexual desire and interpret the veil as a divinely ordained solution to the seeming disparities in male and female sexual appetites. Maududi (1972) justifies this difference according to the nature of men and women:

Man is by nature aggressive. If a thing appeals to him, he is urged from within to acquire it. On the other hand, the woman's nature is one of inhibition and escape. Unless her nature is totally corrupted, she can never become so aggressive, bold and fearless, as to make the first advances towards the male who has attracted her (Maududi, cited in Doi, 1989: 17).

Al-Khattab (1997), a female Muslim who wears the *hijab*, states that it is 'scientifically' proven that men are influenced far more easily by visual stimuli than women, therefore, a woman's *awra*<sup>15</sup> extends far more greatly than men's. Thus, the 'discourse of pro-veiling' (Read & Bartkowski, 2000) claims that men are susceptible to corruption through unrestrained sexual contact with women. Therefore, for women, the rules of guarding the *farj* requires them to stay at home and avoid displaying 'dazzling' looks<sup>16</sup> (Khuri 2001). Conversely, male sexuality is centred on the genitalia, the male body symbolises only a single sexual site (the phallus) not his entire body (Tseëlon, 1995). The command for men is simply that they must protect their *farj*, the rule relating to men is both general and lacks a detailed explanation of how this should be exercised. The difference between men and women, Khuri (2001) suggests, is 'that women's bodies do not correspond to men's, even though they were considered to be created from the same source' (Khuri 2001: 40). Beauty and sexuality are inequitably attributed to the feminine: women are characterised not only by their piety but also by their appearance.

---

<sup>15</sup> The area of the body that must be covered.

<sup>16</sup> Qur'an, 33:33.

### 5.7.3 THE *HIDJAB*

It is essential to deal with the issue of modesty and modest dress by referring to the Qur'an:

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. . . (Qur'an, 24: 31)

According to Doi (1989), the rule is intended to guard not only woman but also the spiritual virtue of men (Doi, 1989). The rule in the Qur'an instructs both sexes to dress modestly, however, 'in practice the emphasis is frequently on feminine modesty alone' (Franks, 2000: 919). Women are told to not display their beauty, strike their feet and draw attention to their 'ornaments' (bodily shape) 'lest her hidden decoration should be revealed by its jingle, and thus attract attention' (Maududi, 1972: 187). Scholars like Maududi (1972) and Badawi (1982) state that the Qur'an allows a certain degree of casualness to those other than the husband or close relatives, for example those living in the same house (believing women or servants, old or frail male servants and young children). According to Doi (1989), the difference in nature, temperament, and social life of men and women, means that more importance is allocated to women's veiling and modesty than to men's modesty. He further states, that the term used in the verse *zinat* (adornment), conflates both natural beauty and artificial ornaments (Doi, 1989: 13-14). The term *zinat* includes makeup or jewellery, it may also be used to refer to a woman's face, hands or natural beauty (Hoffman-Ladd, 1987). Badawi (1982) mentions four main requirements of female dress: extent of covering, looseness, thickness and overall appearance. The principle purpose of the *hijab* according to Badawi is covering the *zinat*. Female hair but also her body is seen as both sexual and sacred in a way that the male hair and body is not. The prescription to wear hijab is relaxed for elderly women who are 'past the prospect of marriage,- there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments, provided they make not a wanton display of their beauty: but it is best for them to be modest . . .' (Qur'an, 24: 60).



#### 5.7.4 MUSLIM FEMALE DRESS

Despite the increasing number of women choosing to wear the *hijab*, the issue of whether Muslim women are required to cover remains a heated debate amongst Muslim scholars (Ruby, 2006). There is great discontent and controversy surrounding the issue of the *hijab* in Islam. We see this as early as the nineteenth century: Qasim Amin (1863-1908) a Middle East reformer, in his seminal text 'The Liberation of Women' (1899) was one of the first scholar's to begin the debate about the veil. He articulated that the egalitarian message in Islam conflicts with the unequal treatment of women. Moreover, he declared that the veil was an obstacle between woman and her elevation: the veiled Muslim woman represented the ultimate symbol of backwardness. He also perceived the veil as representing the backwardness of Islamic culture as a whole, in comparison to the progressive European culture and way of life. More recent commentary or debate about the 'meanings' of the veil frames the question around two aspects: the religious/scriptural and the socio-cultural (Watson, 1994). 'Western' researchers as well as many Muslim feminists view the veil in terms of domination and male control, but some men and women perceive the veil as a mark of dignity, respect and distinction.

Nevertheless, there continues to be ambiguity surrounding the issue of Muslim women and veiling in religious writings. Statements in the Qur'an and *hadith* are taken as reference to veiling; however, some have argued that those commandments were for Prophet Mohammed's wives (Ahmed, 1992; Mernissi, 1987). What is certain, however, is the requirement of modesty for both men and women (Killian, 2003). I look at these issues in more detail by examining the work of Leila Ahmed (1992) and Fatima Mernissi (1987). Amina Muhsin-Wadud (1999), who wears the *hijab*, perceives modesty as valuable for preserving a certain moral integrity, she believes it should be upheld not on the basis of economics or politics implemented by coercion, but on the basis of faith. Central to Muslim feminist strategy is to associate covering entirely for the wives of the Prophet (Roald, 2001):

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested . . . (Qur'an, 33: 59)

The practice of veiling does not extend to *all* women but was an obligation only for the Prophet wives (Ruby, 2006; Ahmed 1992). Leila Ahmed (1992) stresses that the historical

context of the Arab world in which the veil was implemented during the growth and institutionalisation of Islam is instrumental in the debate about veiling. Ahmed's (1992), historical analysis of Islamic veiling suggests that no one veil exists but rather a range of veiling practices. These practices have not preserved their original importance because the ideologies behind the veil have varied in each period. For instance, veiling and seclusion were evident in the Greco-Roman world, pre-Islamic Iran and the Byzantine empire (Keddie, 1991). Early Muslims embraced veiling from non-Muslims in Muslim societies and Mediterranean women in Christian societies. Moreover, Mediterranean Muslim and Christian societies held the same concept of the man's honour which depended on the purity of women (Keddie, 1991: 3). For Ahmed (1992), the crux of the issue about veiling is that it is a cultural custom, not a religious one, which was associated with high social status in Arabia. That is, veiling is a custom distinctively prescribed for the Medinian time and symbolised social prestige during that period. It was also associated with class position: wealthy women could afford to veil their bodies completely, whereas poor women who had to work either modified their veils or did not wear them at all (Killian, 2003). Thus, the veil itself preceded Islam and was practiced by women of various religions. Fatima Mernissi (1987), has also criticised the wholesale adoption of the veil, because she argues that there is no evidence in the Qur'an which makes it an Islamic obligation. She relates it to male domination and repressive gender hierarchy: the *hijab* represents a tradition distinguished by 'mediocrity and servility' not a symbol to judge a Muslim woman's commitment to Allah. She maintains that in verse 33:53 of the Qur'an, a curtain/screen separates the Prophet and his wives from his companions:

O ye who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses . . . but when ye are invited, enter; and when ye have taken your meal, disperse, without seeking familiar talk. Such (behaviour) annoys the Prophet: he is ashamed to dismiss you, but Allah is not ashamed (to tell you) the truth. And when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want, ask them from before a screen: that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs (Qur'an, 33:53).

In the Qur'an, the term *hijab* (33:53), dealt with men's behaviours towards the wives of the Prophet and adds that men must stay behind the *hijab* (screen) while talking to them. For Mernissi, this means that the verse relates specifically to the Prophet's wives dress/covering. Furthermore, she employs the term *hijab* to maintain the issue of separation between men and women. The contemporary use of veiling not only misinterprets the verse to mean that veiling is prescribed for all women, it is also about suppressing women psychologically and physically and creating oppressive patriarchal hierarchies which maintain male dominated social

structures. Yet, Roald (2001), a Norwegian scholar and convert to Islam who wears the *hijab*, argues that Mernissi's discussion of the *hijab* fails to take into account contemporary perspective of the *hijab*. She instead focuses solely on what the Qur'an has to say on the issue. According to Roald's understanding, the term relates to the curtain, which was placed between the men in Medina and the Prophet's wives. Roald (2001) states that the term synonymous with 'veil' is the Qur'anic word *Khimār* which refers to a covering material worn by women. In addition, Mernissi chooses to disregard the verse in the Qur'an about *Khimār*, in order to concentrate on the issue of 'segregation', that is, the *hijab* (Roald, 2001). Roald (2001) argues that although this reference and the subsequent discussion of the verse are not incorrect, it should be borne in mind that the verse only addresses the wives of the Prophet in part. That is, the verse also includes 'believing women'. Thus, by concentrating on the issue of 'segregation' (i.e. *hijab*), Mernissi (1987) neglects this aspect of the verse. Roald further adds that Mernissi's discussion is:

Marked by a lack of specific terminology with regard to female veiling and a certain selectivity in regard to the source material. By interpreting *hijab* as 'the veil', she uses the word as it is sometimes used in contemporary debate, but by confining her discussion only to the Qur'anic verse which mentions the term *hijab* she limits the issue to the veiling or segregation of the wives of the Prophet (Roald, 2001: 260)

Roald (2001) also criticises the Muslim feminist debate because of its selectivity. They focus on those texts which are appropriate for their purposes, thus doing the same thing for which they criticise historic and contemporary male scholars. Although the *hadith* indicate that there are some general rules about decorum for men and women, according to Roald (2001), there appears to be no 'indication of a uniformity of dress. What is described is a general style of dress rather than a fixed form' (Roald, 2001: 267). Moreover, in relation to female veiling, the four schools of law differ. *Shafi'i*, *Maliki* and *Hanbali* support the idea that the face-veil is compulsory, moreover, they support the covering of the face and hands. In contrast, not only does the *Hanafi* school state that the face-veil is not necessary, it maintains that covering the face is voluntary (Roald, 2001). My female participants who wore the *hijab* fell into the *Hanafi* school of thought (none of my female participants wore the *niqab*).

#### 5.7.5 THE VEIL AROUND THE WORLD

El Guindi (1995) argues that there are many meanings associated with the veil and its various forms are dependant on the social, political and historical societies in which it emerges.

Discourses about culture, religiosity, politics and identity are all vital to understanding why some women choose to veil. It is for this reason that El Guindi (1995) argues there are many veils. Not only does the type of covering differ in each culture (Ruby, 2006), but there are a wide range of styles:

From the uniform black cloaks worn by women in post-revolution Iran, to the exclusive 'designer' scarves of women of the 'new aristocracy' in Egypt. Along this continuum of veiling, which runs from state-regulated attire to individual fashion accessory, there is ample room for many local varieties, including the brightly coloured scarves of Turkish peasant girl, the 'Tie-Rack' wraps of European Muslims. The white *haik* of Algerian women and the *burja* of women in Oman. The universal aspect of each of these different styles of dress stems from the formal symbolic and practical aims of *hijab*; to preserve modesty and conceal the shame of nakedness. (Watson, 1994: 141).

Roald (2001), comments that the various terminology reflects the diversity of understanding of what 'Islamic veiling' or 'female Islamic covering' entails in different parts of the Muslim world (Roald, 2001). Thus, one cannot make claims to a universal *hijab*/veil for all women because as Watson's (1994) quotation reveals, the practice of the veil involves personal, political/class associations, local custom and style. Research also reveals that the *hijab* is worn for a variety of reasons. Hoodfar (1997), in her examination of 'voluntary veiling' in Egypt, found that young educated women wore the veil in order to gain entry into the public sphere and to preserve their honour. The veil was used by her participants purposefully to confer women power to position themselves in the public arena. The veil is sometimes used strategically by young women. Drawing upon group discussions and interviews with 49 participants in two schools in Hertfordshire (England), Dwyer (1999) found that young Muslim girls (British born Pakistanis) strategically wore the headscarf to negotiate different spaces, for instance, wearing it to and from school but taking it off in the classroom. The veil in Tiilikainen's (2003), study of Somali women in diaspora in Finland, found that women wore the veil for a number of reasons. Some wore it because of a growth in religious observance and knowledge, others because of the necessity to preserve their own culture and identity. While some Somali mothers instructed their daughters to wear it to protect them in an 'immoral and sinful' 'Western' society, others simply wore it to protect themselves from the cold weather (Tiilikainen, 2003). In Gibb & Rothenberg's (2000) study the wearing of the *hijab* for Harari immigrant women in Toronto was a clear manifestation of a change towards a standardised, global Islam, given that 'in Harar, virtually no-one wears the *hijab*'. Indeed, the *hijab* is a:

Clear statement about women's identification with and participation in the wider Islamic community, and their approach to negotiating Muslim space in non-sex-segregated environments' . . . The hijab, as a universal symbol, connects young women to the wider ummah and global traditions of Islam, and assures Harari women and their concerned family members that they are properly marked as Muslims in a non-Muslim context' (Gibb & Gothenberg, 2000: 250).

Education also plays an instrumental role in the approval of the *hijab* by Muslim in women. Killian (2003), in her interviews with 41 North African women in France, found that younger, well-educated women supported the headscarf as an issue of personal freedom and cultural expression. While some older North African women, who were less educated, disapproved of the veil. They rejected it because it represented a move away from integration with the wider society. Moreover, although not all immigrant women wore the *hijab*, most of them did dress modestly, not necessarily by wearing their traditional native dress (North African *djellaba*), but by wearing long skirts which covered the ankles and long-sleeved shirts. Killian (2003) discovered that the women who choose not to wear the veil on the basis that it resists integration with the wider French society, were acquiescing with the French public. Yet, participants wearing the veil were also adapting to French culture because they were expressing their independence, which is central to secular French society. That is, through the choice to veil, they understood the 'Western' discourse of freedom and rights and were able to use this argument to their benefit. Recent studies have also indicated that the veil is worn by Muslim women around the world for various reasons. Ruby's (2006) study of Muslim women in Saskatoon (Canada), demonstrates the various accounts of why some decide or refuse to wear the *hijab*. For those who choose to wear it, their accounts ranged from associating it with the moral Muslim society and/or a symbol of opposition to immoral values. For others, it was also a religious obligation, a constant theme amongst wearers was that the *hijab* was a mark of identity and allowed women to assert agency, which accorded them status and dignity. Yet, despite the *hijab* being characterised negatively in Canada (stereotyped as terrorists), some women continued to wear it not only in opposition to immodest 'Western' values but also as an emblem of their Muslim identity.

Ruby (2006) suggests that far from the dominant understanding of the *hijab* as a sign of Muslim women's subjugation, the *hijab* for Muslim women 'represents a positive experience for the participants who wore the *hijab*: it allowed them to take control of their lives and offered them the status of respectable person' (Ruby, 2006: 54). While for those who did not wear

the *hijab*, it merely represented a cultural symbol. Yet, the *hijab* also reduced the status of non-wearers since the Muslim 'community' did not consider them to be 'good' Muslims. Furthermore, her non-wearing participants rejected the *hijab* due to the belief that it acted against assimilation with the wider Canadian society. These women do not attract attention to themselves because they dress modestly (without the *hijab*). Ruby (2001), comments that these women still uphold the practice of the *hijab*. Interestingly, although these women do not face the racism that wearing the *hijab* can elicit, they must confront the criticism that *not* wearing the *hijab* can bring from the Muslim 'community'. Therefore, the *hijab* 'in the form of Muslim woman's clothing, emerges as a device to negotiate spaces within the Muslim 'community', as well as in the dominant 'Western' culture' (Ruby, 2006: 65).

Badr's (2004) study, which took place following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> in 2001 in America, examined how Muslim women living in Houston (Texas) understood the *hijab*, and how their views were influenced by the media's portrayal of Muslim women abroad. She found from the results of her interviews with 67 women, that American Muslim women were more likely to perceive and discuss the *hijab* in relation to identity than immigrant Muslim women. Moreover, these women maintained that by wearing the *hijab* they promoted a more positive portrayal of Muslims in the United States. Badr's (2004) study suggests that the *hijab* continues to be both a representation of modesty and a sign of Muslim social identity. Badr comments that despite negative media images and attacks on Muslim women wearing the *hijab* in Houston, in the end it strengthened the attraction and power especially for some American Muslim women. Atasoy (2006), however, argues that Muslim women use the *hijab* to create a sense of cultural difference. Through her analysis of interviews with 18 veiled women in Winnipeg (Canada), she found the veil was worn by her participants because they felt it gave them greater dignity, self-confidence, and cultural identity and promoted a sense of Muslim 'community'. Interviews with some of the women indicate that the *hijab* serves to contribute to the cultural distinctiveness of their 'community', but also the veil for some women allows them to express selfhood. So, 'rather than conceptualize the veil as a frozen embodiment of a particular culture or its subversion, the women here see their veils as symbols of cultural engagement in the struggle for selfhood. This struggle is located within an Islamic cultural ethos, yet it is one in which women connect veiling to their own particular life stories' (Atasoy, 2006: 218).

#### 5.7.6 THE POLITICS OF THE VEIL

If we shift the focus to a global scale, we see that the *hijab* cannot be conceptualised in a purely religious sense. There are various examples around the world that show how and why the veil is worn. El Guindi (1999) argues that veiling 'symbolizes an element of power and autonomy and functions as a vehicle for resistance' (El Guindi 1999: xvi). This is particularly evident in the experience of women in Palestine. During the 1970s, as the Palestinian movement shifted towards Islam politically, their political struggle became a religious conflict. The resistance movements in Palestine during the *Intifada* (uprising against Israel) imposed the veil upon Palestinian women. As a result, Palestinian women and the veil were framed in Islamic terms: not only was it a political identity but imbued with Islamic value. The veil became a powerful symbol of political expression of a unified people. In Iran, the political struggle of the 1970s promoted the veil as a statement of discontent with the Shah's secular rule, which was perceived as an assault not only on Islam but on Iranian culture. Iranian women used the veil as a political symbol of defiance against secularism. However, with the overthrow of the Shah and the return of Islamic (*Shia*) rule under Ayatollah Khomeini, the veil (*chador*<sup>17</sup>) was made compulsory and stringently enforced by the state. Similarly in Algeria, during colonial French rule (1830-1962) women were told to remove their veils in order to stamp control on the indigenous population. Women were thus political activists in the struggle against colonial rule. The veil was used to reflect women's apparent political participation rather than a commitment to religious doctrine. It was actively used in challenging and manipulating discursive meanings of gender and national identity. In Saudi Arabia, Iran, and until recently Afghanistan, the practice of veiling was enforced by the states legislative body (Moghadam, 2004). In these countries, there is a formal and explicit approval of appropriate Muslim dress for women. The diverse ways women wear the *hijab* and the various forms of Muslim dress in the Muslim world, indicate that local traditions and customs dictate what is considered appropriate 'Islamic' attire. Yet, what is equally important is the social, political and historical aspects of why women choose or are expected to wear the veil. The various and diverse attitudes towards the *hijab* for women signifies that there is no exclusive 'Islamic attitude' towards wearing it (Watson, 1994). Moreover, the decision to veil is influenced not only by religion, but sometimes more by social, political and economic factors and how closely affiliated one is with the cultural and traditional customs of their native country.

---

<sup>17</sup> A chador is a specifically Iranian form of female dress. It is a full-length black cloth which is open from the front, women close the chador holding it shut by their hands.

A stark contrast to state legislation on veiling is the example of Turkey which called for legalising the unveiling of Turkish women. The Turkish state went through a process of 'reculturation' that employed dress to embody reformations of the new principles of the regime. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s and 1930s implemented sweeping reforms to Turkish society, principally away from the Ottoman Islamic past and towards 'Western' style modernisation. The reconstitution involved ideologies of nationalism, modernization and secularism. Ataturk's regime encouraged women to remove their veils, to embrace 'Western' attire and style and to work with men for the growth of the new progressive nation. Central to the idea of reforms was that women's dress was essential to Turkey's nationalist project, because veiling was considered 'uncivilized' and 'backwards' (Secor, 2002: 9). Since the 1990s, however, there has been a challenge to these state regulations: a 'new veiling' movement has emerged where young women are embracing an urban form of Muslim dress. Although the state continues to pose sanctions against veiling, young Islamist women are adopting a dress which allows them to be both modern and Muslim. The new style consists of a 'turban' a large headscarf type *hijab*, with a fitting long raincoat designed to cover the curves of the body. Therefore, Islamist women have challenged what they perceive to be oppressive state sponsored anti-veiling, which discriminates against devout Muslim women. Indeed Secor (2002), points out that decades later 'young, self-consciously Muslim women struggle against Turkey's secular establishment for the right to wear headscarves at universities and in other national spaces' (Secor, 2002: 6). Indeed, 'repeated attempts to remove forcibly the *hijab* by post colonialists, modernizers and secularists in, for example, Algeria, Egypt, Iran and Turkey has led to the unavoidable emblematic status of the *hijab* as signifier of initiation for young women into Islamist movements' (Franks, 2000: 919).

#### 5.8 FEMALE PARTICIPANTS WHO WORE THE *HIJAB*

There were 19 females in my sample who wore the *hijab*: all were practising Muslims, 8 of whom had done *Hajj*, while 1 had done the *Umrah* (Nafisa, 37). Some older Pakistani female participants wore the traditional Pakistani dress (*salwar kameez*) (Yasmin 49, Misbah 70, Najma 50, Naheed 43 and Kauser 49). While the remaining females all wore 'Western' clothes: shirts, loose and fitting tops, trousers or long skirts. Female participants wore the veil either by firmly wrapping the *hijab* around their face or by loosely covering their head showing some of their hair. With the exception of older Pakistani and Indian females, who wore *salwar kameez*, all of the participants wore the *hijab* with 'Western' clothing. My female participants reflect the global trend where the *hijab* in recent years has become increasingly popular (Ruby,



2006). Ali (2005) questions why there has been a resurgence in young, 'Western' and educated Muslim women choosing to wear the *hijab* while their parents or elder siblings chose not to. She believes that this is because 'the women under consideration are agents of change, of self and others' (Ali, 2005: 515). Indeed, this rejects the portrayal of women who 'choose' to wear the veil as disempowered without 'a face and a voice' (Nair, 2003: 45). Many of my younger female participants who were born and bred in Scotland had been exposed to British culture more so than those women who arrived as migrants. For young participants, wearing the *hijab* was often based on a personal understanding of what they believed to be modest dress in Islam. These young women (Samra 25, Zainab 20, Humaira 29, Iram 25, Maryam 22, Sadia 36, Khadija 27 and Shabana 18) through university, attended religious lectures, Islamic camps and circles and thus gained an increasing awareness of their faith and the way the *hijab* symbolised their Muslim identity. Young educated women were more likely to feel that the *hijab* was an issue of personal and religious freedom. As Table 15 below, indicates 5 female participants had an B.A. degree, 3 held a M.A. degree, 6 were educated up to college, 2 were still at school, while 2 were educated only at school level and 1 had no formal education.

Name	Age	Ethnic Origin	Level of Education	Hajj	Umrah
Yasmin	49	Pakistani	School	-	-
Misbah	70	Pakistani	-	Yes	Yes
Nafisa	37	Pakistani	College	-	Yes
Saima	46	Pakistani	College	Yes	Yes
Najma	50	Pakistani	B.A. Degree	Yes	Yes
Naheed	43	Indian	B.A. Degree	Yes	Yes
Kauser	49	Indian	B.A. Degree	Yes	Yes
Fatima	44	Iraqi	College	Yes	Yes
Samra	25	Pakistani	M.A. Degree	-	-
Zahra	38	Iraqi	M.A. Degree	-	-
Iram	25	Pakistani	B.A. Degree	-	-
Sadia	36	Pakistani	M.A. Degree	Yes	Yes
Khadija	27	Egyptian	B.A. Degree	-	-
Maryam	22	African	College	-	-
Zainab	20	White British	School	-	-
Humaira	29	Pakistani	College	-	-
Naima	38	Pakistani	College	Yes	Yes
Shabana	18	Indian	School	-	-
Basma	15	Iraqi	School	-	-

Female participants stated it was a personal decision: 'for me, somebody who was brought up in a 'Western' environment, the *hijab* was a personal choice it has little to do with my husband' (Sadia, 36). Yet, not everyone was free from influence, especially young females. Farzana (British born Pakistani), a 16 year old who was still at school, stated that since her mother had done the *hajj*, religion had become more important in the family life. She added 'I'll probably be expected to wear the *hijab* in the future'. This indicates that the practice of Islam is not always a personal endeavour but open to subtle expectations and influence. Some British born Pakistani women, like Humaira, were raised in a cultural and traditional Pakistani environment where they were expected to wear the *dupatta* (loose scarf worn over the head or over the shoulders) when attending the mosque or when male guests were in house. The *dupatta* is regarded as a sign of modesty in South Asian dress. This suggests that there are other ways of being and dressing modestly yet, both Saima and Humaira criticised the wearing of the *dupatta* because it left the hair exposed. Saima, a British born Pakistani, similarly commented 'we were always told to cover it [head] but we were never told the reason why, I now understand that Allah wanted us to cover our head'. Humaira discussed her experience of wearing the *hijab*. She had left home at the age of 16, lived in a hostel for a few years and by her own admission was at the time living life like a non-Muslim:

I only started wearing the *hijab* a year ago, I used to wear it infrequently but I understood why it says that women should wear it, cause I felt comfortable with it. I know if I just put it on, it would easily come off, it's something that you slowly develop. The *hijab* is the whole covering, the modesty, the clothes, the way you are inside.

Therefore, women exercised greater control over how they looked through a greater degree of choice and understanding. Moreover, some of the women at the *dars* spoke at length about the shift in the way they dressed. Although some of them dressed modestly, wearing *salwar kameez* and *dupatta*, coming to the *dars* and believing that the Qur'an and *hadith* promote not only modesty but also head covering caused many women to adopt the *hijab*. Moreover, many wore the *jilbab* which is a long, loose over garment, which covers the entire body, with a *hijab* worn on the head. Indeed, some of the women felt that there was a recent emergence of a standardised Muslim dress for women which entailed the *hijab* and for some the *jilbab*. Other women in my sample chose to wear the *hijab* after being spiritually inspired by the experience of going to the *Hajj*. This was the case for Saima and Naima. For the latter, this was not an easy transition and still caused a degree of conflict, this was because her husband was more involved in religious activities (he was a member of ISB). She stated that she found

it difficult to wear it at work. The *hijab* was an essential component for these female participants' Muslim identity, and choosing to wear it was important in declaring one's commitment to religion:

I wore it [*hijab*] just because I felt really connected to Allah. Some people say Islam doesn't really require you to wear it, but I just think the Prophet said it was a good thing. I don't think you should dress all tarty, it makes yourself more cheap. (Shabana, 18)

Read & Bartkowski's (2000) study of 24 Muslim women in Austin (Texas), 12 of whom wore the veil and 12 of who did not, found that some in the former group believed that by doing so they were freeing themselves from men's gaze and untamed sexuality. Similarly some of my participants felt that the *hijab* was an embodiment of dignity but also:

A means to protect my respect, honour and modesty which will envelop my beauty and emphasise my mind and intellectuality. [The *hijab*] is my method of protecting my personal view of myself. I cannot do this without *hijab*; it would leave me lacking control over what people see of my body hence, I would feel exposed to strangers. (Samra, 25)

Indeed, women wearing the *hijab* are able to 'assert agency, which in turn confers status and dignity to its wearers' (Ruby, 2006: 64). Also, my participants, like Ruby's (2006) subjects believed the *hijab* to be something which gives them power and protection from the male gaze:

The purpose of the *hijab* is so that other males can't look at our beauty, and Allah wants us to keep that for our husband's. I feel that there is a beauty that a woman has, and wearing the *hijab* beautifies a woman, and for you to cover up something that is solely for someone else is a beauty in itself. (Saima, 46)

The *hijab* is worn in public, in private however, women are expected to dress well and make themselves attractive for their husband's to keep them from straying (adultery). The view of some women conformed to the arguments put forward by traditional scholars like Maududi's (1972). Maududi (1972) argued that men would look at things that appeal to him. Nafisa similarly believed that because the woman is naturally prone to decorate and beautify herself she is more likely to draw attention to herself:

If there is something beautiful in front of you who is going to stop looking, nobody will stop looking because it looks nice. You shouldn't be vulgarly dressed, important parts of your body have to be covered – because that's your decency, showing yourself should only be for your husband, because God has made us for our husband's, our beauty is for men. The way she should speak . . . has to be modest, if she is speaking to a man she has to be abrupt, she shouldn't be polite. The reason is you can give them the impression that I am interested in you, that's where the problem starts. It's when boy and a girl are meeting together they're having a chat and he's like she's coming on to me, it's an automatic reaction because it's the opposite sex. (Nafisa, 37)

Women are upheld as the defenders of social morality in society. Some views ascribed women the ability and responsibility to contain or prevent men from committing 'bad behaviour'. Failing to do so has serious repercussions for women: 'The more you're covered, the more it's safer for yourself, there are so many rapes cases, and what were they [women] wearing? A mini-skirt, a short blouse!' (Nafisa, 37). Nafisa, who lives on her own, finds it difficult to grant such women any respect. There was a sense of Nafisa feeling morally superior to immodest women through dress. What this also indicates is the strict separation of woman as either modest/chaste, or immodest/decadent, sexual and uncontrolled. By dressing in a manner which provokes attention the woman is 'asking for it' (any sexual assault therefore, is self-inflicted). For Nafisa, rape is a crime which is perpetrated precisely on the basis of the woman's appearance and behaviour. Of the 5 converts, only Zainab (White Scottish convert) wore a *hijab*, and for her the transition to the *hijab* was not a dramatic one: 'I would say the whole thing about the dress came natural to me, it was like an overnight transformation'. Zainab prior to converting went through a pre-*hijab* phase of not wearing revealing clothes before deciding to wear the *hijab*.

#### 5.8.1 NON-WEARING *HIJAB* FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

There were 16 female participants who did not wear the *hijab*, all of whom were non-practising Muslims with the exception of 3 women (Rabla, 28; Sumaiya, 49; Saira, 34). Rabia (28), a Moroccan postgraduate student, expressed the intention to do so in the future: 'one day hopefully I will wear it [*hijab*]'. While Alma (21), a Bosnian University student did not wear the *hijab* because she was not a 'completely practising Muslim' but believed and acknowledged that 'it says in the Qur'an that you have to cover yourself'. Alma like Rabia indicated that once she was sufficiently committed to Islam might wear the *hijab*, but at the moment she was not ready to do so. Similarly, Rahila (28), a British born Pakistani, declared: 'I don't wear anything revealing I've always had myself covered'. Nadia (33) a single woman,

similarly commented: 'I wear long skirts, in terms of the way I dress yeah, I do dress modestly'. For these women while not wearing the *hijab* maintaining the boundaries of modesty is possible by not wearing clothes that expose the body. The issue of modesty was therefore just as strong an issue for non-*hijab* wearing women as it was for participants who wore the *hijab*. These women believed that it was not compulsory to wear the *hijab* to be a good Muslim woman (cf. Saint-Blancat, 2002). The Table below shows that of the non-*hijab* wearing females, 4 were educated to postgraduate level (including a PhD), 5 had an undergraduate degree, 4 had a college education and 3 up to school level:

Name	Age	Ethnic Origin	Practising Non/Practising Muslim	Level of Education
Rahila	28	Pakistani	Non-Practising	College
Nadia	33	Pakistani	Non-Practising	M.A. Degree
Alma	21	Bosnian	Non-Practising	School
Kathrine	20	Argentinean	Non-Practising	College
Rabia	25	Moroccan	Practising	B.A. Degree
Sumaiya	49	Kurdistan/Iraq	Practising	PhD
Saira	34	Pakistani	Practising	B.A. Degree
Aisha	29	White British	Non-Practising	M.A. Degree
Farah	32	Pakistani	Non-Practising	College
Rukhsana	33	Pakistani	Non-Practising	School
Farzana	16	Pakistani	Non-Practising	School
Sophia	40	White British	Non-Practising	B.A. Degree
Uzma	33	Pakistani	Non-Practising	College
Huma	38	Pakistani	Non-Practising	M.A. Degree
Alison	37	White British	Non-Practising	B.A. Degree
Nazneen	34	Pakistani	Non-Practising	B.A. Degree

There were 5 converts, 4 of whom were non-practising Muslims and did not wear the *hijab*. Yet, they articulated the importance of dressing modestly. Alison, a White Scottish convert married to a British born Pakistani, felt that 'you can be modestly dressed without having it restrict you in anyway'. Similarly Aisha (29, White Scottish convert) and Katherine (20, White South American convert) stated that they dressed modestly. However, other female participants were more vocalised in their criticism of the *hijab*, in the following quotation Uzma (33) a community worker used personal experience to re-confirm the belief that how a female acts and behaves is far more important than her attire:

I seen a cracker the other night in front of Masjid [mosque] Noor (in Pollokshields, Southside of Glasgow), I would not have believed it if I hadn't seen it. There was this girl who was in a BMW doing the rounds Albert Drive, I was out with the pram, I thought tinted windows can't really see anything, I thought wander who that is; probably a guy going round and round. I saw it a couple times and I saw some boys standing outside Masjid Noor and she actually stopped and did the window down. I didn't know she was a woman at the time, and she did the window down and she had the radio on full, the *hijab* on, and she was speaking to the boys and I thought hmmm and thought none of my business, so I walked on. I don't think wearing a *hijab* necessarily makes a woman feminine or make her behave in a proper way I think that comes from within, which is why I took mines off.

Uzma feels that the boundaries in place when a woman wears the *hijab* may also be present when a women chooses not to wear it. Furthermore, simply because women wear the *hijab* does not say anything about the sexual and moral propriety of the wearer. Sumaiya (49), a Kurd, who had a doctorate, along with Nadia (33) and Huma (38) were the only women who employed the concept feminist to describe themselves. Sumaiya discussed the same issue:

It is not important to cover yourself from my point of view. I would like everybody to wear decent clothes, but not covered. Because it's women who cover themselves with the scarf and the *hijab*. A women could be decent without the *hijab*. There are people who wear the *hijab* but they are doing stuff underneath that *hijab*.

For Uzma and Sumaiya, those who wear the *hijab* must be fully committed to their faith yet to wear it under false pretences is not only hypocritical but also irreligious (cf. Dwyer, 1999). In the following account, Uzma, continued to discuss her reasons for no longer wearing the *hijab*:

I took up the *hijab* for about three months but I felt I was still getting stared at, I wanted to protect myself from people staring at me, when they saw me, they stared at me even more in some cases. I don't think wearing a *hijab* necessarily makes a woman feminine or makes her behave in a proper way, I think that comes from within, which is why I took mines off. I don't get a lot of looks even when I'm walking down probably because a) I'm too fat and b) I don't wear anything tight or revealing and I think it's the way you walk as well. I march when I go out I've always been a fast walker, you see in Pakistan they walk dead slow I think that is attracting attention. (Uzma, 33)

Uzma is safe from the intrusive gaze of men not by wearing the *hijab* but because she feels her body is not a site for attracting attention. By being fat she embodies the antithesis of the contemporary 'Western' ideal of female beauty. Slimness is valued as a sign of beauty, self-discipline, good health and sexual attractiveness (Haavio-Mannila, 2001), while the fat body is

portrayed as ineffective, powerless or asexual (Kent, 2001). Rather than choose to wear the *hijab* as a method of protecting herself from the gaze of others, she instead concentrates on other aspects of her behaviour by modulating her walk and dress. Yet, she feels her modesty is preserved not according to contemporary 'Western' ideals but within a religious framework. In contrast, Nadia argued that women place themselves under self-surveillance by embracing 'male' values of 'ideal' female behaviour and thus reinforcing the prevailing Muslim discourse of feminine virtue. Her argument is closely aligned with Bartky (1990; 1988) and Tyler's (2003) concepts of femininity which involves a 'labour of production'. It is the female, not the male body which is subject to discipline and control, thus men have imposed the veil on women to control their own sexuality. She also questions and challenges the idea that women must be responsible for policing men's sexual desire:

Why should women have to wear a *hijab* just because men have a real issue with women looking pretty because they can't deal with it, that really pisses me off! I'm not prepared to be an asexual being. The only way I can avoid this is by putting on a *hijab*? I don't think that's the solution. (Nadia, 33)

For Nadia, the veil detaches sexuality from the female body: women are expected to portray an idealised, yet disempowering femininity which denies them sexual and social power. The aspect of modesty for non-practising and non-*hijab* wearing women is summed up by Nazneen (34), a British born Pakistani and part time postgraduate student:

On the whole I think a woman should really dress modestly. It's up to the woman themselves, for me I would always dress modestly. I can come home dress modestly and start dealing with the housework, my neighbours can come up and I will be dressed modestly, I can go over to my father-in-law and I'm dressed modestly . . . in order for me to live a happy, intermediate lifestyle being a Muslim, I think it's appropriate to me to dress modestly.

Ultimately, female dress is a far more essential for women than it is for men. The female body 'demands attention and invites regulation' (Price & Shildrick, 1999: 3). Both participants who wore the *hijab* and those voicing their opposition against it believed it was important for women to dress modestly. There were thus, different degrees of modest dress: for some this meant donning the *hijab*, for others it meant simply dressing 'appropriately' or not wearing revealing clothes. The above indicates that the *hijab* is worn as a symbol of religious obligation and is part of a personal endeavour to dress modestly. The veil for women serves several purposes: as we see in Ruby (2006), my participants saw the *hijab* as a positive thing, which they could use to control their perception of themselves as well as enjoy the status of

respect it conferred. It was also a way for some women to demonstrate their obedience to their faith, a symbol of the difference between men and women, and a way to police the male gaze.

## 5.9 CONCLUSION

My aim in this chapter was to describe the construction of femininity in Glasgow, by looking at 'Western' sociological literature, the teaching and interpretations of the Qur'an and *hadith* by traditional and modern scholars and the views of my female and male participants. I began by looking at the extensive and considerable array of work undertaken to understand women's experiences in their private and social lives. In the social sciences, much of this research has been directed by feminist principles. As a result, much of the sociological research on gender is engaged in restricting the understanding of femininity from other perspectives (namely religious and ethnic). Marriage, motherhood and gender roles are all critically condemned because they are central to the subordination and oppression of women. By imposing 'Western' social categories onto the social experiences of Muslim women, we are unable to highlight or examine the differences amongst women with regards to their ethnicity, race and religion. More critically, much of the literature is based on a Caucasian 'Western' perspective and experiences. This creates a uniformed way of interpreting the world of women. Indeed, much of the literature provides theories which articulate a universal explanation of women's experiences. There is no 'space' in sociological literature to conceive of femininity as composed of a relational, positive and mutual entity. Nevertheless, the impact that feminism has had on discussions about women's position within the home and society is essential in order to understand men's elevated position both in the public and private sphere. I acknowledge that in my analysis of my participant's views, there are times when 'Western' sociological theories have proved enlightening. However, for the most part, these theories ignore a multitude of factors essential in appreciating the experiences of Muslim women.

One example of this was seen in regards to the sociological work on marriage and motherhood, which perceives these institutes as perpetuating female subordination. In stark contrast, amongst Muslims, marriage, motherhood, roles and responsibilities and even the concepts of equality and equity are described and conceptualised in terms at variance with the language of sociology in the 'West'. I also explored how traditional and modernist arguments differ in their interpretation of the feminine role. It was found that traditional scholars believed that religion prescribes a set of principles, roles and duties which promotes men's and



women's natural abilities and capacities. In the Qur'an there are numerous verse on justice and equality, financial maintenance, divorce, and inheritance. It provides women with social and legal support to enhance their rights. It is clear, however, that traditional and modern Muslim scholars place different interpretations and emphasis on these rights, duties and privileges. I also looked at the debate about the *hijab*, not only examining the reasons why women (including my own sample) choose to wear it, but also extending my examination to how it is worn by Muslim women around the world. What this revealed was that women have historically and contemporarily used it as a political tool against is ruling regimes. Thus, the *hijab* is also influenced by social, political as well as religious aspects. In the next chapter, I examine female and male views on the construction of femininity.

## CHAPTER SIX

### FEMALE PARTICIPANTS VIEWS ON FEMININITY

In this chapter, I discuss the views expressed by my female participants on femininity. How do they describe femininity and feminine behaviour? Are participant views centred on issues such as physical appearance, dress, personal characteristics, roles and social behaviour? Using participants' ideas about femininity, I also assess whether 'Western' feminist theories on the construction of femininity are supported or rejected.

#### 6.1 THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY

Gender was related to an inherent and biological framework for some female participants. The ubiquity and continuity of gender stereotypes legitimated and strengthened some female participants' belief that gender was a natural and unchanging reality of a male/female personality. Women frequently employed the use of expressive traits/qualities (i.e. warm, caring, nurturing and so on) to describe femininity:

We're much more caring, loving and understanding. (Farah, 32)

Someone a bit more like gentle, caring, soft, ladylike. (Maryam, 22)

Not being aggressive, aggressiveness is a quality of a man. Feminine qualities, would be love, caring, empathy, sympathy. (Kausar, 40)

All three females were housewives and their husbands the sole breadwinners. Feminine attributes for others was natural:

Participant: I think women should be more nurturing.

Interviewer: Should be or *are* they more nurturing?

Participant: They are more nurturing for smoothing down ruffled feathers, for keeping the peace, creating a nice environment and just being nice to be with. (Khadija, 27)

I think woman are very different to men in every aspect, we're a different breed! [laughs]. I think that women are stronger than men, emotionally, we have the capacity to make a home, that nesting instinct. (Alison, 37)

The power associated with femininity is the power to care for others. Being feminine also centres on being maternal and is associated with established maternal attributes. A mother is naturally able to provide selfless attention and care to her children:

I think it's to do with compassion and understanding and caring, I think it's more to do with the mother figure' (Aisha, 29).

Samra (25) extends the woman's role to the care of other members of the family:

To be sympathetic towards her husband's needs, or if she's not married then her father or brother's needs and really I think women obviously are more supportive in that way, so she's really acting as a counsellor to rest of the family.

Samra was one of three sisters and was brought up in a working class home. She stated that she was taught to believe that housework was the woman's duty. Women must relinquish their individuality for the sake of others: she must give and not take. For others, femininity was described in terms of representation and was associated with attention to one's appearance: 'being feminine is basically looking after yourself, taking care of yourself, being attentive to look well presented' (Alison, 37). Decency is measured not only by a woman's moral character, but also with the way they appear and dress. The female acts as a visual stimuli to which the male reacts. The woman's voice also possesses the power to seduce. This view corresponds with the following verse in the Qur'an: '... be not soft of speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease aspire (to you), but utter customary speech (Qur'an, 33: 32). According to this verse, the voice of a woman is alluring and may 'corrupt' or ensnare men. Therefore, it is the responsibility of women to regulate their speech so as to protect their virtue and not draw male attention:

[Femininity means] the way a woman should talk . . . laugh, she shouldn't laugh that loud. A woman shouldn't be all that open to anyone. (Basma, 15)

I think in order to protect society from certain bad behaviour the women should not talk in a very attractive way, they have to watch the way they talk, their voice, the way they walk. Feminine behaviour is being careful. Because there is a lot of sexuality associated with femininity, so women. (Zahra, 38)

Men were also characterised as possessing a masculine hypersexuality, with the veil acting as a divine solution for such sexual differences (cf. Read & Bartkowski, 2000). In this sense, it is men who are the 'weaker sex'. Women possess a higher moral nature but at the same time,

they have the power to disrupt and corrupt feminine virtue. For some participants, care and self-sacrifice as a distinctly feminine quality entailed a persistent association and preternatural concern about others to the detriment of the self. The celebration of sacrifice restricts female potential:

I think being self-sacrificing is a feminine trait it comes from looking after the family putting the kids first, you feed them before yourself in general day to day when everything's fine then it's not a good thing, you can end up being subservient to your children even. (Sophia, 40)

Motherhood is characterised by expectations of maternal sacrifice. Indeed, mothers are seen as romantic figures: all-forgiving, life-giving and self-sacrificing (Glen, 1994).

Women are mothers, women are sisters, that's the only way a woman can get respect in our culture and in Islam, women are not perceived as individuals. They're always linked to or attached to someone else: a male. (Nadia, 33)

Nadia, who considered herself a feminist, went further: she supported the arguments put forward by 'Western' feminists, in particular Brownmiller (1986), who argued that patriarchy continually promotes traditional constructions of feminine behaviour, which includes the care and love for others. It emphasis on domesticity and submissiveness to male demands continues to objectify and keep 'women in their place'.

#### 6.1.2 FEMALE VIEWS ON FEMININITY

Qualities which were deemed unfeminine were placed in the masculine category because it conflicted with some participants' understanding of femininity and appropriate feminine behaviour. This corresponds with Terman & Miles' M-F scale (1936), which positioned masculinity and femininity at the opposite end of a continuum. Femininity was constituted in not being like men:

When a woman tries to be tough, like strong, wants her own way all the time. To me if you do that, you're just going the other way, to be just kind of loud. (Maryam, 22)

Women reinforced their own feminine identity by disassociating themselves with typical masculine attributes. Some of the characteristics they felt were unfeminine Included: 'being loud' (Basma, 15) 'being aggressive' (Kauser, 49), 'being butch' (Samra, 25), 'being' something

which they are not: men. There was an assumption of a biologically determined social and psychological experience:

Participant: I think the woman should be lesser degree in all of them (strength, wanting to know about current affairs, teach the children, be knowledgeable), she should be the learner whereas the man is the teacher. Imagine the woman is coming from a household where she is only taught domestic chores how is she going to know about all the other aspects of life? Men are able in this world they do have more knowledge of worldly affairs than what women do. Men have more opportunity to go out, to talks, or go about educating themselves whereas women can't.

Interviewer: What if women did have the opportunity?

Participant: If she still had the opportunity, I would see her still as not having as much knowledge as he would. If I'm looking at it from an Islamic angle, if the woman is having her menstruation then she can't touch the Qur'an. She can still hold her *dars*, the amount that she learns will actually be limited, there's a lot of things I'm prevented from going to because I'm a woman. I'm not allowed to go to camps, can't stay overnight for a couple of days, my brother can, but I have to be accompanied by another man when I'm out. So for me to learn everything is not possible, but yet a man is not questioned. (Samra, 25)

Women are positioned as the 'learner': she shapes her identity only in reference to men. Men are active women are passive. Because she menstruates, she is impeded in her desire to learn and gain Islamic knowledge. In this perspective, 'women are physically handicapped by menstruation . . . and therefore cannot and may not compete with men' (Delaney, Lupton, & Toth, 1988: 4). Moreover, because a woman requires a *mahram* she is unable to travel on her own. Therefore, Samra's idea about what a woman can and cannot do also depends on the idea that a female requires a man in certain places. Interestingly, Samra had an undergraduate degree and was currently a postgraduate student. She also worked part time. Nonetheless, she promotes an image of woman as a passive, weak and unintelligent being without any agency or autonomy.

### 6.1.3 ARE YOU FEMININE?

The purpose of the question: 'do you consider yourself as feminine' was to allow female participants to judge themselves based on the self-identifier 'feminine'. Women readily acknowledged their feminine 'nature' which was for some at the core of their sexual identity and validated their womanhood: 'femininity is what makes a woman a woman' (Uzma, 33). For some, there was no dissonance between the psychological, social and the biological. Some females interpreted the concept of femininity as a constant feature of their own female

identity: '[I'm feminine] in everything, everyway. The way I behave, the way I tackle stuff, the way I behave socially with my friends and at work' (Sumaiya, 49). However, the terms 'female' gains real meaning when it is paired with its relational opposite. For participants, what it means to be a woman in any given context is contingent upon their own gendered performance as a woman but also on what they are not supposed to perform or 'be': 'I prefer ladies to be ladies not to be like men' (Najma, 50). Others constructed a feminine identity in relation to what is not masculine:

Interviewer: Do you see yourself as feminine?

Participant: Uh huh.

Interviewer: In what way?

Participant: Well I'm hardly going to say I'm a man I [laughs]. If you're a female you have to be feminine.

Interviewer: Have to?

Participant: Yeah, they should be, because if you're not, then that's being all the things that we have been talking about being butch, loud I don't think it's very attractive in a woman. (Aisha, 29)

I haven't taken on the male role, I wouldn't ever contemplate that, it's not in me to be the masculine person, I've always been the feminine, the home maker, the mother (Kausar, 49).

Both women were housewives and by situating and locating themselves in the private sphere, these women gave legitimacy to the conventional feminine stereotype which bound women to the domestic sphere. Similar to Butler's (1997) theory of performativity, gender requires performance and repetition in order to solidify a woman's belief in her gender identity. Femininity for these women required a degree of effort. However, others placed a firm belief in the essential differences in temperament or traits between the sexes.

Yes, I do see myself as feminine, I don't think I'm masculine and I'm more emotional than my husband. If I was to compare myself to my husband, I'm more sensitive to certain issues than my husband in dealing with children there's a difference. (Sadia, 36)

Thus, some females saw themselves as inherently different from males, socially, emotionally and physically:

There can never be an equality of males and females. Females will always be different regardless of whatever anybody wants to say, females have this natural instinct to be more sympathetic that's something we cannot deny. (Samra, 25)

Samra's comments reflect al-Jibaly (2000) remarks that the two sexes are intrinsically different and therefore cannot be equal. For Samra, it is unrealistic to apply this term to describe men and women because they are intrinsically different. For others, considering oneself feminine revolved around their appearance:

In some aspects I see myself as feminine. I can definitely be the girly girl, I like dressing up, I like to feel that I'm a woman. Femininity also means to be strong in feeling that you are a woman. (Khadija, 27)

Khadija, a British born Egyptian, used characteristics congruent with her gender to affirm and preserve their female gender identity (Spence, 1993). However, personal and social experiences also shape a female sense of her femininity:

Participant: I think my father would have been perfectly happy for me being asexual, but when I started using make-up when I was about 17, he didn't like it, me coming across as someone with a sexuality.

Interviewer: How would you describe being asexual?

Participant: Being female but not being feminine. I remember I always used to like short hair but my mother used to like long hair and obviously long hair is associated with being feminine and my mum had a real issue about getting my hair cut, my father was like: "go get it cut". I think it would be less attractive. Shoes was one thing that my father always went to buy with me, there would be fashions and trends, and he was like: "no way"! The kind of shoes that he would recommend were quite sort of masculine, completely functional and not being feminine. (Nadia, 33)

Nadia's hairstyle, use of make-up and shoes were a way for her father to suppress his daughter's sexuality through exerting control over her feminine appearance. In contrast to Nadia's experience, Saima, a Pakistani mother of three, regulated and monitored her only daughter's behaviour in order for it to 'become feminine'. The extract below reveals that gender is a continual process which requires a labour of production:

My daughter is not very feminine! [laughs] because she acts more like a tomboy than a girl! I say to her "girls don't do that", for example she's very heavy, she walks very heavy on her feet thump, thump, thump, all the time. And I say to her it's not very ladylike it's not very feminine, you should try and walk less heavily. Because you can hear the noise and it's attracting attention and the way she'll sit, very much like laid back like guy type, well not guy type, but not in a lady like manner and I say to her "girls don't sit like that" and if she's wearing a shirt she'll open her top button and I tell her "girls don't do that". (Saima, 46)

Saima's comments relate to the Qur'an's verse (33:32) about women being complacent in their speech. What is also evident is that for a woman to be feminine she must 'adjust' to (not 'naturally' become) and accept the behavioural norms for her gender. That is to say, an elaborate process of socialisation restructures a female into a 'woman', a degree of regulation and labour is required. Saima's response indicates how important it is for women to occupy little space; women's bodily posture and movements are expected to be constrained (Bailey, 2001). Sexual difference creates feminine and masculine spaces, and these sexed spaces help create feminine and masculine bodies. Other female participants described feminine behaviour as associated with popular ideas of 'doing' femininity: '[femininity is] the lippy, the clothes, the shopping' (Nazneen, 34), 'femininity means being a woman . . . wearing a dress, that's what I think of when you say femininity, the colour pink' (Shabana, 18). Feminine behaviour reflects and is mediated through ('Western') cultural idioms, values and practices. There is no authentic femininity. The following extract reveals that femininity is not a static concept but a shifting construction of the self:

Participant: I used to think of myself as being more feminine when I was thin, I liked to dress up and I had long hair. I do see myself as feminine but I think my femininity is reflected in me being a mother, through motherhood. Maybe that's something which causes frustration within me, maybe I'm not feminine anymore because I'm a woman with a child and therefore I'm just a woman.

Interviewer: Does being feminine mean to be alluring?

Participant: Yes! (Huma, 38)

For Huma, a Pakistani mother of one daughter, a significant shift has occurred between two distinctive performances of gender. Being feminine before becoming a mother was characterised by long hair, being thin (aesthetically feminine) dressing up and being attractive. Huma's ideas about femininity corresponds with Bartky's (1990) description of the types of practices that lead to the construction of femininity. However, as a mother, she has become different from her former self because motherhood denies her an individual identity: 'I'm just a woman with a child'. Her feminine identity is associated with her being maternal. Having a child has meant that Huma has had to reconfigure her gender identity. She feels desexualised: 'I'm not feminine anymore' because being feminine means being alluring, attractive and sexual. In contrast, Rukhsana demonstrates how femininity is used creatively:

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself as feminine?

Participant: Sometimes. When I choose to be. When the mood is right basically, when I feel like putting on a nice pretty dress or pretty clothes, sometimes I just want to look smartish or I want to look like a layabout.



Interviewer: When you dress up, does it bring about a change in the way you behave?

Participant: I think a quick answer without thinking about it I would say yeah, probably. Because it does take a certain amount of nerve to do it, because I don't dress like that all the time so I would say yeah I have to be in a frame of mind where I can carry off a look.

Interviewer: Do you think that's all it is, to 'carry off a look'?

Participant: Again quickly yeah it's just a look, it's the way I want to feel, it's the way I want to be today, it's the way I basically want to come across to other people. (Rukhsana, 33)

A woman is most feminine not when she is herself, but when she enacts an elaborate masquerade (Radner, 1995). Rukhsana exemplifies Butler's (1997) theory of performativity which postulates that gender is an artificial construct which is repetitiously performed in order to create the idea of gendered identity. However, clothes alone do not adequately create a sense or feeling of being feminine but a characteristic state of feeling ('when the mood is right') which is required to 'carry off' this look. This masquerade allows Rukhsana a greater sense of freedom and autonomy to control how she is perceived by others. She selects certain feminine characteristics and plays them out in order to be feminine, her enactment of feminine behaviour illustrates that the adoption of femininity is consciously constructed and therefore precarious.

## 6.2 'ISLAM' AND FEMININITY

Some female participants believed that sexual difference gave them a profound understanding of the role femininity plays in their lives. Saima (Female, 46) puts it succinctly: 'Islam teaches us that a female is different from a man'. It was believed by some of my participant's that Allah's creation of human persons into male and female is intended to provide for complementary functions:

Islam says that it's the women's role to look after the family, nurturing the family, keeping the house and the happy home for the husband. Husband protects, provides, cares he is the breadwinner. (Kauser, 49)

For Kauser, an Indian housewife, the home provides space in which she can affirm and strengthen her femininity and feminine identity. Indeed, her comments are specific in references to the verse in the Qur'an dealing with the maintenance of women (Qur'an, 4:34). Her understanding is similar to that of traditional scholars like Maududi (1972) and Doi (1989), who argue that Allah has clearly defined gender boundaries. It also reinforces the very basic

idea of masculinity and femininity as being on the opposite end of a continuum (Terman & Miles, 1936). Nevertheless, this does not imply the ranking of one sex as inferior or superior. This is avoided by designating each sex a set of rights and responsibilities. It is only 'natural' that Allah has created man and woman to fulfil those roles. Maududi (1972) metaphorically describes the role of Allah as the Maker and Owner of a factory, and men and women as parts of that factory:

The Maker and Owner of the Factory cannot desire that His Factory should cease to function. He will naturally want that all the parts of His Machine should continue working in order to fulfil the purpose for which they have been designed' (Maududi, 1972: 133)

Interdependency is a direct reflection of the specificity of the division of labour as laid down by Allah. It is religion which influences the women's understanding of male and female behaviour, which is achieved by constructing masculine and feminine positions in the family. Women defined themselves by their biological function and consequently placed a particular emphasis on the sexual difference between male and females:

Clearly the nature of woman, the gender of the woman Allah has clearly made that different, emotional state of women is completely different to that of men and distinguishable from men. (Sadia, 36)

God has made us differently in our general makeup as well there are differences it transposes itself into culture. (Saima, 46)

Biology, it seems, is destiny. For other participants there was an explicit expectation that women should and must behave like women. Sadia and Saima, as mothers, believe in woman's natural instinct, legitimating and accepting a biological determined experience. Zainab in the following quotation provides a summary of how she perceives femininity:

Islam provides very clear instructions, the *hadith* gives good example to use, it shows you how to interact with woman and your husband. In the Qur'an it tells you the way you should tie the scarf, how that should be worn and how the front should be covered as well. And the whole thing about moderating the voice there are specific examples. There is a very specific dress code in Islam particularly when you are out in society that you are not wearing provocative clothes that you are covering yourself. (Zainab, 20)

Religion provides intricate details for appropriate feminine behaviour. There are clearly different interpretations of what my participants hold to be 'Islam's views'. For example, while Sumaiya (Female, 49) believed that the *hijab* was not a religious requisite but something which is used to control women, Zainab (20) felt that the Qur'an states explicitly the reason and methods of how women should wear the *hijab*. In the next section, I examine male participants' views on femininity.

### 6.3 MALE PARTICIPANTS VIEWS ON FEMININITY

Muslim men, too, have their own views as to what constitutes femininity. In this section, I examine my male participants' views and beliefs regarding roles.

#### 6.3.1 THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY

Feminine characteristics for some of my male participants were associated with biology. Instead of perceiving femininity as a socially constructed entity, femininity was constructed using an essentialist framework to understand the difference between men and women. According to some men, women displayed a proclivity toward expressive tendencies, such as understanding and sensitivity:

I think women also tend to be perhaps more sensitive, they express their sensitivity more openly I think that's a feminine quality. (Nauman, 36)

Soft, that's it. Because that's what you want to find when you look at a women, soft. To me femininity is gentleness, kindness, being loving. (Haroon, 36)

I feel it's in their [female] character to require someone, they could walk out, when there's a very hard problem they require somebody to stand with them, and I think that's going to be the husband. (Yaseen, 17)

All three men were born and raised in Scotland, and for them femininity involved women being associated with others and was thus relational: to be loving, sensitive, understanding, gentle, emotional and kind. Yaseen, who was still at school and whose mother was a housewife, characterises woman's 'nature' with an inherent desire to be needed. Women lack autonomy because they are dependant upon men. This image emits a dual message. It constructs the masculine as leader and protector ('stand with them') which emphasises instrumental masculine qualities, while at the same time, reinforcing expressive feminine qualities (women look to the male for protection). Masculinity and femininity therefore are mutual constructs 'to the extent that they construct each other even (or perhaps especially) when one of them is not

mentioned' (Sunderland, 2000: 267). Representations of femininity also contain representations of masculinity. Zubair, a Pakistani businessman whose wife was a housewife, used the metaphorical image of the man standing over and above the woman: 'one [male] is to stand, the other [female] is to help and comfort, if they both start standing they are not much good to each other, so one has to be standing and the other to support'. This comment was a reference to the verse in the Qur'an about men being a 'degree above women'. His remarks also reveal that the feminine is invisible without the presence of the masculine. This relates to the idea that:

Femininity pleases men because it makes them appear more masculine by contrast; and, in truth, conferring an extra portion of unearned gender distinction on men, an unchallenged space in which to breathe freely and feel stronger, wiser, more competent, is femininity's special gift. (Brownmiller, 1986: 4)

Male participants, like their female counterparts believe that women are 'naturally' more nurturing and caring than men, and thus their natural place is in the home bringing up children and looking after the husband. The husband, on the other hand, is equally occupied in his role as the breadwinner. For Haider, a British born Egyptian, whose wife was a Doctor, women were inherently are merciful, patient and compassionate. These qualities were closely connected with a woman's role as a mother:

I see woman as having patience, but I would think that the stronger quality is their mercy and compassion and that is sometimes overriding at times. Well the womb in Arabic means *Baytul Rahim*<sup>1</sup> which means the house of mercy, so that's enough evidence for me (Haider, 32)

Women, according to this ideology, are inherently more compassionate because their female body possesses the womb (source of new life). The womb is a sanctuary to nurture and protect life and is used as a metaphor to describe and explain woman's merciful and compassionate nature. Haider's view supports Murata's (1992), who points out that the word womb (*rahim*) represents the natural qualities (mercy, compassion, tenderness) of a mother towards her children. This is contrary to the view of Rich (1976) who argued that the womb is used against women to contribute to their powerlessness. Women accentuate or bring to light their true feminine identity:

---

<sup>1</sup> Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, 'The word 'Ar-Rahm (womb) derives its name from Ar-Rahman (i.e., one of the names of Allah) and Allah said: 'I will keep good relation with the one who will keep good relation with you, (womb i.e. Kith and Kin) and sever the relation with him who will sever the relation with you, (womb, i.e. Kith and Kin)' (Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, *Hadith* Number 17).

In *Haq* [truth] it should be the woman's touch or influence of the mother on the children, that's why it says that paradise lies at the feet of the mother, that's such a high status. Why does it say that? Because there's a *hikma* [wisdom] behind it, because what the mother can do for the children the father can never do, because he doesn't have the feminine touch. The father can say to the children, "here's your dinner", what's next, ok here's A, here's B and C. Whereas a woman can go into depth with the children, I'm not saying men can't do that they can, but not to the highest extent as the woman. (Waqas, 24)

For Waqas, a British born Pakistani whose wife was a housewife, the association between motherhood, emotion/care and femininity is central in informing ideas about feminine behaviour motherly care and nurturance. Motherhood is portrayed as 'natural', 'intuitive' and 'instinctual' and mothering exemplifies the ultimate in relational devotion, affection, and importance. These men support the idea of motherhood as being a natural responsibility (Schleifer, 1996) not a socially imposed responsibility (Forcey, 1994). The delegation of childcare was the ultimate responsibility of the mother because she is able to guide and care for her children and to inculcate values in a way that which the father 'can never do'. For Rafiq, an Indian born medical Doctor, this difference is manifested in the fragility of woman:

Women tend to be more fragile than men, there's always the exception, but in general I think women are made that way, even in animals the female tends to be more fragile than the male, the male is the one who fights. Fragility is important because if they were not fragile and were as violent as men can you imagine them bringing the children up? (Rafiq, 48)

These male participants, by reifying ideas of motherhood, naturalise and idealise women's nurturing aptitude. Femininity was also characterised as a set of qualities given by Allah which women must safeguard and protect as a divine aspect of their personal identity:

If you say behave like a woman, don't go to the other side, moderate yourself in your talk, don't show off. Don't go out without your mother/father's permission. (Hameed, 50)

Femininity for Hameed, a Kurdish married father of two, is associated with the concept of honour and shame: the family's reputation is permanently and intimately intertwined with the sexuality and behaviour of female members. The issue of honour and shame is: 'essentially male, but it is women's lives and actions which affect it most. A 'woman can have *izzat* but it is not her own, it is her husband's or her father's. Her *izzat* is a reflection of the male pride of the family as a whole' (Wilson, 1978: 5). As a result, female behaviour and action becomes an

exclusively male concern, because 'women are in Islamic sexual culture seen as natural and powerful, to be feared and physically contained' (Combs-Schilling, 1989: 93). Some men expected women to meet certain feminine standards, to be gentle, quiet, and modest:

Being quiet . . . I think this is the most feminine character, quietness or quiet character not that she shouldn't discuss things, or speak, but she speaks much less than man, she argues much less than man, she never raises her voice in the open she does not laugh very loudly in the open. (Abbas, 52)

For Abbas, an Iraqi who held several degrees, the female must be submissive and respectful to the man. When she conveys her thoughts, she does so in a gentle and quiet way, careful not to usurp the male ('speaks much less than man'). This contributes to strengthening gender role differentiation: an ideal of femininity which is meek, submissive and quiet. The juxtaposition of power with femininity was troubling for Haroon:

I think the feminine is trying to become the masculine and the masculine are losing their masculinity becoming more feminine. Why are we having so many divorce cases? I think women have to become more feminine, I think there losing that. (Haroon, 36)

Haroon, a father of three children, also spoke of the effects that the 'Western' drive for gender equality has had on the family. For Haroon, it is women in the 'West' who appear to be in the midst of a 'crisis in femininity' in modern society. Moreover, it is women whose identity is devalued, fractured and precarious, because their nature (female sex) is incongruent with the attributes they are adopting (masculinity). The surrendering of femininity and a disregard for a feminine identity by females has serious consequences for society. Interestingly, Haroon argues that to be feminine, women have to 'become more feminine' because they are losing their feminine identity. This indicates that a personal effort is required to become feminine. It does not involve simply reverting to a natural tendency. For some male participants, femininity was socially constructed. They challenged and undermined the simple binary opposition of the sexes:

Femininity to me is when women don't try to do things that they don't want to. I associate femininity as someone who chooses to play that role, because I know they don't have to play that role if they don't want to. My older sister didn't want to play that feminine role – sit in the house and just be a housewife. She went to college and she worked in a sewing factory. (Abid, 38)

Abid was non-practising, single and lived on his own. His personal experiences conflicted with ideas of women 'sitting at home doing nothing' because all his sisters were financially independent and worked for a living. Abid did his own cooking and cleaning and did not believe that domestic work had to be the exclusive responsibility of the women. For Abid, the idea involved a submissive domestic position which limits women's potential. It was associated with a lack of autonomy, agency and an inability to exert power to claim and actualise an independent identity. His choice, of words to describe women playing a feminine role ('someone who chooses to play that role') indicates that femininity does not refer to an essence or stable quality, rather women define themselves as feminine out of choice not out of desire to be true to their essence. For Tahir, (36) a journalist, the difference was far simpler 'my distinctions are just biological, I would like woman to have the same rights and freedom as any other person especially men'. Tariq, a middle class father of one, ridiculed the traditional ideal of feminine attributes such as being demure. Instead he associated typical masculine qualities with being a woman: 'I feel it's usually women who are the more braver and courageous' (Tariq, 40). All three (Abid, Tahir and Tariq) were born and bred in Scotland and were not brought up in an environment where religious practice was important, therefore cultural ideas about gender were not related to religion.

#### 6.4 ISLAM

Although my male participants differed in the degree of their religious knowledge and practice, many appeared to accept the role Islam played in defining what they considered to be femininity. At the most basic level of understanding, there was a strong belief that religion covers the entire range of human life: 'Islam provides guidelines for everything, even going to the toilet we must use our left hand, Islam has not left this very minor thing, do you think Islam has not provided answers for major things' (Hanif, 55). For Pervaiz (65), a middle class retired physicist, sex differences were not accidental but intentionally and purposefully created by Allah: 'because we [male/female] are physically different'. For others:

In Islam the duty of earning is for the husband, it doesn't mention that the woman has to go out of her responsibility to the family to earn money.  
(Rashid, 35)

Rashid's thoughts reflect the work of conservative scholars, like Maududi (1972), who indicate that the sexual division of labour which religion advocates is an indication that men and women are different physically, and this difference will transpose socially and culturally in

relation to the roles they play. Some male participants argued that what is prohibited for men may not be prohibited for women and vice versa. This is believed to relate to the sex of the person:

Men can wear perfume women can't in public, men can make a noise while they're walking along, women shouldn't, it's about attention. What would attract attention and cause difficulty for a woman and same for a man? It is how you dress and how you behave, how a woman shouts and screams, how she shouldn't laugh in public because somebody may find the voice attractive. Because it will lead on to certain things that's where the problem is. (Yasir, 37)

Women are prohibited from applying perfume because it prevents draws attention. Yet, no restrictions are placed upon men because it is believed that women would not be attracted to men as men are attracted to women. By regulating her behaviour, the female learns the qualities which are consistent with her sex to create a feminine sensibility and personality. For Haider, a primary school teacher, religion does not provide stringent guidelines for feminine behaviour:

Islam gives you role models of people behaviour that you should try to adhere to, I don't know if I can say it's defined in terms of masculinity or femininity. There are examples there for everything, I don't think there is sort of template man, template women. (Haider, 32)

#### 6.4.1 *HIJAB*

There have been many studies on the *hijab*/veil and why some women choose to wear the *hijab*, yet to my knowledge none have examined the views of Muslim men on women's *hijab*. For some male participants, the *hijab* was an essential aspect to protect one's femininity through modest behaviour and modesty. For Haroon, whose wife wore the *hijab*, a woman's modesty is both desirable and beneficial as it provides protection:

I think dressing modestly is important, if you're not dressed modestly then you're alluring yourself to other people that's one of the dangers that happen, if your dressing modestly your protecting yourself' (Haroon, 36).

The obligation to dress modestly was based on the higher aesthetical value of the feminine: there was a simple juxtaposition in that women appear and men [re]act:

Interviewer: Do you think it's important for women to cover themselves?  
Participant: Oh yes, men should also dress modestly, so should women.



Interviewer: But the responsibility appears to be more on women?

Participant: Yes, because women are more beautiful than men in general, so in order to excite somebody two people are required, two things are required, something to look at and something to react. (Pervaiz, 65)

In order to protect this 'beauty' male like female participants, argued that the *hijab* provided a solution to the problem of the male gaze. It is interesting to note that no one advocated this to be a male issue. That is, it was not deemed to be a man's responsibility to guard and lower his gaze (despite this commandment being applied to men first cf. Qur'an 24: 30). Instead, the *hijab* was held to enhance woman's beauty but at the same time provide a source of protection:

Showing your femininity is the Islamic way, it's to protect herself, I see women as more beautiful when they have got their *hijab* on. (Usman, 39).

First of all it is a ruling from God; you shouldn't ask any more questions after that. When you see a woman covered with a *hijab* and not revealing any part of her body you feel a respect towards that woman. To be honest if you see a woman wearing short skirts you don't feel respect you feel an attraction and this may cause some people to go further if their not properly religious or if they don't fear anything that time, they might do something like rape. (Yaseen, 17)

For practising Muslims like Yaseen whose mother and sister wore the *hijab* and Usman, an Iraqi whose wife wore the *hijab*, the laws given by Allah must ultimately be obeyed. Yaseen goes on to dichotomise women as either modest or immodest. The modest and veiled woman is held to be a paragon of feminine virtue because she protects her respect. Gerholm (2003) in her article focused on ideas about masculinity and sexuality among transmigrant Arab Muslims. She found that it was important for the men to control their sexual desires and they did this in five particular ways: through visions of paradise, polygamous marriages, storytelling, sermons in the mosque, and stereotyping Swedish women. Her participants strongly believed that men, not women, are able to contain their desires and create a steady relationship with God. Her participants regarded women as irrational, weak and lacking self-control. Indeed, this was precisely why women required the protection/control of men, namely their fathers/brothers, and then their husbands and his brothers (Gerholm, 2003: 405). Interestingly, Yaseen also implicates woman in the control of men's sexual drive. Also like Gerholm (2003), my male participants present men as passive, while women are described as active, however, men only become active when women ignite their sexual urge. Woman it

appears has no sexual agency, she is open to men and available to be used, denigrated if she is sexually active or punished if she refuses. The *hijab*, however, acts as a barrier and shields and protects women. On the one hand, modest women are elevated to a position of purity, virtue and compliance, and on the other, scantily dressed women are a devalued articulation of debasement and sexuality. My male participants used the same ideas as female participants to articulate their understanding of femininity. By wearing the *hijab*, they were protected from the male gaze, but men were also protected from acting out their desires. Waqas, whose wife and sister wore the *hijab*, similarly spoke about the sexualness which imbues the woman's body and the subsequent affect and impact this has:

If you had a sister and there was a room full of men here just now, and you walked in the way you were and your sister walked in wearing hot pants and short top and she came in like that and there's a room full of us guys just sitting here, who would they look at? It'll be like a pack of wolves; every person will be checking her out, the way she's walking, what she's doing, where she sits. Whereas a Muslim woman would just walk in and she'll sit down, though she'll get a couple of stares it's not going to be the devouring stares that your sister would get. (Waqas, 24)

Modesty implies respectability, in contrast to a woman wearing provocative apparel. Other male participants particularly highlighted the problems associated with a woman who dressed immodestly and the affect that this has on male behaviour:

I think it is human nature, man's nature, that openness in the females' body brings sexualness and that leads to sin and corruption, supposing a woman's body leads to filthy things, for that reason Islam has asked women to cover themselves . . . because they [woman] are more precious, in the eyes of God women are fragile. If you have a brick or a stone will you put in your safe? You won't. But if you have a little diamond you will try if not in a custody safe you will put it in a small box and hide it somewhere, it is precious. Woman is the livestock of God's precious thing, they are not to be looked at or exhibited they belong to somebody. (Zubair, male 61)

Zubair, (61) a middle class Pakistani, believed female sexuality leads men to sin. In contrast, a modest woman is described as a precious stone ('little diamond') that must be guarded and protected, because women are the 'weaker sex'. It also indicates that the husband sees his wife as one of his belongings (women 'belong to somebody'). Again, this gendering casts men as the guardian's of women. This theme was expressed by other participants:

There is a very interesting *hadith* that says that woman are not flexible like men, you can't bend a woman, bending her would break her. We are just different by nature, but that does not give anyone of us an authority over the other. I would say we're equal in complimentary roles. (Yasir, 37)

Yasir, a practising Muslim, advocates a belief in the discourse of 'fragile women'. Being a woman places her in a position of weakness. The particular *hadith* he is referring to reports that the Prophet stated: 'treat women nicely, for a woman is created from a rib, and the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion, so, if you should try to straighten it, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So treat women nicely'<sup>2</sup>. Women are presented as soft and delicate and the *hadith* recommends that they be handled with care and kindness. In the next section I examine domestic work: who does what within the home and why?

## 6.5. 'WOMEN ARE CLEANER': THE DOMESTIC DIVISION OF LABOUR AMONG PARTICIPANTS

### 6.5.1 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Over the last three decades academic inquiry into the domestic division of labour has flourished (Kynaston, 1996; Presser, 1994; Cliff, 1993; Gregson & Lowe, 1993; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Wheelock, 1990; Hochschild, 1989; Thomson & Walker, 1989). It is important to note that much of the research on women's role/position in the domestic realm has been undertaken by sociologists and feminists in the 'West'. A critical reading of previous studies alerts us to the tendency to focus on the experience of White married couples (Garrido & Acitelli, 1999; Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Berardo, et al. 1987) or White women (Blair & Johnson, 1992). Moreover, there is an explicit recognition of women's continued responsibility for the majority of household tasks and this it is argued, is indicative of oppressive marital relations (Szinovacz, 1992). To my knowledge, there has been no such study on the domestic position of South Asian women and/or Muslim women in Britain.

Given the quantitative nature of much of the research on domestic work (Press & Townsley, 1998; Robinson & Milkie, 1998; Benin & Agostinelli, 1988; Ross, 1987) the race or ethnic background of the women being researched is an issue that has escaped analytical or theoretical examination. My study however, clearly indicates that culture and religion impact

---

<sup>2</sup> Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 55, *Hadith* No. 548.

on both men's and women's understanding of domestic work. The large body of sociological research on housework has largely been conducted in America (Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Press & Townsley, 1998; Robinson & Milkie, 1998; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Szinovacz, 1992; Benin & Agostinelli, 1988; Ross, 1987). In Britain, it is worth noting that the study of gender and domestic work has taken place in England (Cliff, 1993; Gregson & Lowe, 1993; Wheelock, 1990) and in Wales (Morris, 1985). The main focus of such research has been on White participants and the effect of male unemployment and female employment on the dynamics of domestic work in the household (Wheelock, 1990). While Morris (1985) studied the impact of male redundancy on the family structure and domestic arrangement, Cliff (1993) looked at men who had taken early retirement and whether a shift in the male position in the family reconfigures the male/female domestic position. The change in women's position in the paid labour market research has also been studied: the arrangement of domestic work amongst dual career households to assess whether female employment leads to an identifiable change in the division of domestic labour (Gregson & Lowe, 1993). Therefore, research in Britain appears to have a uniform objective which is to examine the extent to which employment alters domestic arrangements. All of these studies have examined whether a real shift has taken place in women's role within the domestic sphere to a more equally shared domestic arrangement between husbands and wives.

My research, in contrast, seeks to understand and examine whether a traditional domestic division of labour is a means of maintaining a feminine identity for Muslim women which in turn bolsters the masculine identity of their spouse. In addition, when differences are examined by feminists, they are very often interpreted using a White 'Western' feminist framework which condemns the family and marriage as oppressive institutes. Ahlander and Bahr (1995) summarise the feminist perspective and critique of the division of labour. They argue it is based on 'the assumptions that sex role ideology, both in families and in the larger society, stems from a dominance/submission relationship between the sexes, and that this hierarchical arrangement is rooted in the kind of work assigned to each' (Ahlander & Bahr, 1995: 5). However, there are clearly some very important observations to be made by referring to feminist work to help understand Muslim women's position in the domestic sphere.

## 6.6 BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPANTS

From the sample of 35 females, seven were housewives. From a total of 33 male participants only one was a househusband. 85% of the male participants were in full time employment in contrast to 26% of females working full time, as we can see from Table 17:

Table 17: Male and Female Occupational Status			
Male Occupational Status		Female Occupational Status	
Full Time Employment	28 (85%)	Full Time Employment	9 (26 %)
Part Time Employment	-	Part Time Employment	13 (37 %)
Retired	2 (6%)	Retired	-
Student	2 (6%)	Student	6 (17%)
Househusband	1 (3%)	Housewife	7 (20%)
Total	33	Total	35

The analysis in my research was compiled by asking participants the following questions: 'who does the housework?' (washing up, cooking, ironing and cleaning) and 'who is/was responsible for childcare?'. These questions were geared towards creating an overall impression of who devoted much of their time to domestic work. Throughout this chapter, the term 'household' is preferred over the less inclusive term of the family. Although the term 'family' may include a number of relatives (married couples, children, grandparents etc.), they may not share the same residence. The term household, in contrast, may span more than two or three generations and indicates that people share the same dwelling. Therefore, the household 'is not as a separate entity operating within the 'private' sphere, but as a 'space' where individuals work out their daily lives' (McKie et al., 1999: 158). The term 'family' is used in conjunction with the roles that either the male or female plays and how it impacts on their understanding of there gender identity.

## 6.7 HOUSEWORK

Housework can be considered as the amount of hours of domestic work performed by a member of the family. Housework in the 'West' continues to principally be 'women's work' (Brines, 1994). There is an abundant amount of evidence that documents that the division of domestic work between men and women in the family remains to be unequal (Kynaston, 1996; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Hochschild, 1989; Thomson & Walker, 1989). In general, previous studies have shown that housework remains an activity dominated by women (Speakman & Marchington, 1999; Kynaston, 1996; Hochschild, 1989), whether they are employed (Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Thomson & Walker, 1989) in dual-earning marriages (Presser, 1994) or in part

time work (Leonard, 2001; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997). In short, they bear much of the responsibility for childcare and housework. For Ellison and Bartkowski (2002), this inequality is a reflection of a wider problem: 'the household is a key site for the negotiation and reproduction of gender roles, and the division of labour within the home is widely viewed as a lynchpin in the structure of contemporary gender inequality' (Ellison & Bartkowski, 2002: 950). According to this, an implicit assumption directing much of the research is that women occupy an oppressive position within the family. Indeed, 'housework is popularly characterised as tedious, boring, and unsatisfying labor' (Robinson & Milkie, 1998: 205). According to this, family relations 'are reduced to matters of conflict and accommodation in service of the personal accumulation of money, power and other resources' (Ahlander & Bahr, 1995: 60). Moreover, the literature dealing with women and housework characterises domestic work as being a source of marital conflict (Hochschild, 1989).

In contrast, both male and female participants in my research did not regard housework as creating great conflict within their marriage and the issue of 'fairness' (Kynaston, 1996) never arose despite women working and carrying out most of the housework. This was mainly because there was a shared belief that women belonged in the domestic domain. My female participants made it clear that they were responsible for the arrangement and performance of domestic work. The root of this inequality stems from the socialisation process: it is through the dynamics of child raising that gender is socially constructed (Poole & Isaacs, 1997). All of my participants stated that when they were growing up their mother was solely responsible for domestic work. Some participants used socialisation as a way of understanding the disparity, as Samra, a single female who lived with her parent's comments:

We [herself and her sisters] got taught at the same time how to cook, so mum wouldn't have to teach us all separately. We started learning how to cook at the age of 12/13 but our brother still hasn't learnt anything apart from frying an egg and he's seventeen! (Samra, Female 25)

Samra's was brought to believe that women were responsible for domestic work and to 'look after the men'. In a similar vein, Farah (Female 32) a part time worker, who shared domestic work with her mother-in-law, states: 'it's just the way he's [husband] been brought up, the women have to do everything'. Male participants also acknowledged that women performed most of the housework. Yet some provided cultural and practical reasons to justify this:

A woman should at least know how to cook, in order for her to have a better life when she gets married she will be able to do well in her career as a housewife, so she becomes a good daughter-in-law and wife for her in-laws. (Rashid, Male 35)

A 'women's career', according to Rashid, involves her marital life and children. Rashid is a working class, Pakistani immigrant who had only been living in the UK for 4 years. His wife is a White British convert who worked full time, but who, because of her blindness, was not able to do any housework. Rashid projects an 'ideal' role of woman which is anchored in his cultural upbringing in Pakistan. Some male participants made statements that conflicted or were contrary to their lived experience. Anwar, a working class retired bus driver (Male 63), whose wife was a housewife, invoked the traditional adage: 'a woman's place is in the house', while Abbas (Male 52), a middle class Iraqi whose wife was a housewife, remarks that 'it would be much better if everyone plays his/her function properly, the man brings in the income and employment and women is mainly for looking after the house and children'. In proffering this line of argument, Abbas separates the public from the private. As Saeed (Male 34), a middle class Moroccan puts it: 'for her [wife] this [house] is the castle and she is the Queen'. The division of domestic work is supported by principles of fair exchange and complementarity. However, for Ross (1987), this does not necessarily mean the creation of positive reciprocal roles but the delegation of tasks (housework), which are menial and onerous by the spouse who possesses more power than other. She goes on to explain:

The assumption that housework is a low-status, unpleasant job underlies the relative power hypothesis, housework and child care, whatever their intrinsic merits, are not highly valued or rewarded. Thus, more power (usually economic power) is expected to translate into a decrease in the proportion of housework that is done. (Ross, 1987: 817).

There are several points in the above quotation worthy of further exploration. Firstly Ross's work refers to a Caucasian sample. The 'assumption that housework is a low-status, unpleasant job' is not a view held by female participants in my research. The economic power that the husband gains through work has very little effect on the amount of housework he engages in. Although religion has seldom been used as a tool to measure attitudes to the allocation of domestic work, Ellison and Bartkowski's (2002) study on conservative Protestants reveals observations relevant to my research. They found that 'for many contemporary conservative Protestants, the acquiescence of couples to God's plan for men and women constitutes an important symbol of their commitment to their faith and to the lifestyle it seems

to imply' (Ellison & Bartkowski, 2002: 975). The following quotation clearly illustrates this point: 'Islam has said that woman has to look after the house and it's the man's duty to earn the money for his children and wife' (Kamran, Male 29). Some male participants made statements that conflicted or were contrary to their lived experience. Kamran declares that it is the man's duty to provide, yet, his wife Uzma shared the financial burden of running the household. Kamran, a working class Pakistani who had been living in Scotland for 11 years, made several references to the cultural customs in Pakistan. His quotation, like Rashid's earlier, conveys an ideal picture of what he holds to be Pakistani/religious tradition. Difference sources interact from religion, family and ethnicity to create gender in a way which 'symbolically represents expectations or beliefs about performance in household behaviours and responsibilities within marriage' (Orbuch & Eyster, 1997: 303). Moreover, there is an expression of patriarchal authority in Kamran's use of the term 'man's duty' to illustrate his financial responsibility to his family.

Evidence from my research supports this; 66% of my female participants were responsible for the following household tasks: washing up, cooking, ironing, and cleaning, largely because these are chores traditionally considered as 'female tasks' or 'women's work' (cf. Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Press & Townsley, 1998; Brinos, 1994). Despite two of the women (Huma, 38 and Sadia, 36) stating that housework was shared, they did all of the cooking and much of the housework. Nafisa, a divorcee who lived on her own while her children lived with her ex-husband, however, did state that she was a housewife when she was married. 17% of younger female participants who were unmarried and lived in the parental home stated that their mother's did most of the housework, however, they also helped out: Shabana (18); Basma (15); Alma (21); Rahila (28); Samra (23) and Farzana (17). In only four households (11%), women shared domestic work with their husbands/partner (Rukhsana, 33; Khadija, 27; Humaira, 29; Uzma, 33). All the women were born and raised in Scotland. In the remaining two households (6%), Zainab was the only female who did not do any housework because she was blind. While Misbah's (70) daughter, Nadia (33) did much of the work in the house because of mother's old age.

Women are involved in the visible aspects of housework and 'tasks performed by women within the household such as cooking and cleaning . . . are seen as tasks ideally and naturally suited to women' (Leonard, 2001: 67). Indeed, almost every study conducted in the 'West' which examined the domestic division of work has found that not only do women perform



double the amount of work than men, but also the type of work they do is different (Blair & Johnson, 1992). Many of my male participants admit that their contribution to housework was minimal, preserving a permanent gendered division of domestic labour. Perhaps the term 'minimal participation' is more apt where the wife performs more chores while the husband does at least a minimal amount (Benin & Agnostinelli, 1988). As Omar (Male 37) a middle class paediatrician acknowledges: 'I'm just lazy, I do things around the house but its more in the garden'. Thus, the work that men do in the family involves irregular and occasional chores such as mowing the lawn, household repairs or gardening (Thomson & Walker, 1989: 855).

#### 6.7.1 PART-TIME WORK/CHILDCARE

In this section I use some of the findings of research conducted on White participants who work part time to draw on parallels with my research. Berardo et al. (1987) found in her study on White dual career couples that being married to an employed wife did not lead to the husband significantly increasing the amount of housework he did. One way married women attempt to balance their life between the domestic work and paid employment is by choosing to work part time instead of full time (Leonard, 2001: 68). In my study (See Tables 18 & 19), 13 females were employed in both part time (37%) and 7 in full time work (26%) and some of these females changed from full to part time because of young children and the domestic responsibilities they held in the family.

Table 18: Female Participants in Part Time Employment			
Name	Occupation	Number of Children	Children: Young/Older
Iram	Help line Advisor	-	-
Sadia	Professional	3	Young
Samra	Youth Worker/Student	-	-
Zahra	Housing Asst.	3	Young
Naima	Office Administrator	2	Young
Sumaiyaa	Designer/Interpreter	3	Older
Farah	Clerical Worker	2	Young
Saira	Secondary School Teacher	2	Young
Sophia	Project Worker	1	Young
Huma	Public Health Officer	1	Young
Naheed	Manageress of Nursing Home	4	Older
Alison	Nurse	3	Young
Nazneen	Race Equality Officer	3	Young

There were specific reasons for the 13 women being in part time work. Iram a working class helpline advisor, was married but had no children worked part time because she said was

often unwell. Samra, a working class, single female, worked part time because she was also a part time student at university. From these 13 women, 11 had children, 9 of whom were under the age of 7, the remaining 3 were aged 14 and above (classed as 'older'). While women who had older children worked part time because they were responsible for housework, women with younger children cited that because they were responsible for their children they chose not to do full time work. Although most women needed to work due to sharing financial responsibilities, some like Saira and Alison choose to work not out of financial necessity because both stated that their income was not used to run the family finances. Rather Saira and Alison whose husband's were both medical Doctor's worked because they wished to maintain their involvement in their chosen professional field. Saira was a qualified Teacher and Alison a qualified Nurse. Thomson and Walker (1989) similarly found that amongst White couples, females more than men consider the family and their needs when they enter and leave the labour market, decide what time of the day they will work and determine the number of hours they work. Indeed, 'the presence of small children is closely connected with women's reduced participation in paid work' (Thomson & Walker, 1989: 851). Women in my sample who worked full time (See Table 19 below), also took these factors into consideration, as 5 of the women in full time employment were not married and had no children. Rahila was the only single female who lived in the parental home. Although, Humaira and Uzma had children who were under the age of 7, they stated that their husband's helped in domestic chores, therefore, they were able to rely on them to share domestic work. While Nafisa's children lived with her ex-husband. Saima's children were all over the age of 14, so the issue of childcare was not a problem. What this reveals is that domestic work for women who were in full time employment did not act as a hindrance to their occupational status because domestic work was shared with their spouse allowing them to work full time.

Table 19: Female Participants in Full Time Employment			
Name	Occupation	Number of Children	Children: Young/Old
Rahila	Civil Servant	-	-
Nadia	Youth Worker	-	-
Zainab	TV Production Asst.	-	-
Humaira	Customer Service Officer	1	Young
Khadija	Doctor	-	-
Nafisa	Childcare Worker	2	Young
Rukhsana	Stock Controller	-	-
Saima	Civil Servant	3	Old
Uzma	Community Worker	2	Young

Many of the males in my study expected their wives to be the primary caregivers to the children: 'my wife has never worked since I married her, she used to be a teacher, but she stopped working when we married because she agreed with me completely that her proper function was to bring up and look after the children' (Abbas, Male 52). In addition, unlike their husbands, wives perceive housework as an important element of their femininity. Women either assume occupations which reflect their domestic and childcare responsibility (part time work) or relinquish employment altogether. This reinforces the image of the nurturing and loving mother:

A mother's love is the first school of the child, the father can't take over that and because the mother goes through so much pain in bringing that child out so the mother's responsibility increases, her respect increases. (Hanif, Male 55)

The construction of the ideal mother perpetuates traditional ideologies of femininity, which is to care for others in order to realise one's concept of one's feminine self because 'gendered divisions of family work affirm self identities' (Kroska, 1997: 307). Ibrahim, a middle class professional, who was single, and Rahim, a middle class IT Analyst was married with two children and had been living in Scotland for 15 years stated:

If you look at a woman in the office . . . if one of the businesswoman has a child every woman around her will go maternal, they always revert back . . . revert back to natural instincts which is to be motherly, to care for something, to be maternal. If my wife and I have children I would prefer her being with the children. (Ibrahim, Male 26)

The woman is the one that gets pregnant, who breastfeeds them, it's basic nature. A woman's place is with her children, the mother's love is for her children. When a mother cuddles her children it's different from the way the father does. (Rahim, Male 37)

Haroon (Male, 36) a British born Pakistan and the only househusband in the sample, did not work. Yet, he did not classify himself as unemployed, nor was he concerned about being referred to as a househusband. He believed it was imperative for one parent to stay at home to look after and care for the children:

I spend a lot of time with the children but I think women probably are better with children than men at a younger age. I think naturally they are much better than men are. That is really their main role, it's not cooking or cleaning, the priority is children.

The relationship Haroon has as a father with his children is not based on any paternal bond or instinct. It is a relationship which is an 'ongoing *process* of social construction. Fatherhood is constantly being shaped and reshaped according to cultural context, work and family relations' (Brandth & Kvande, 1998: 295). For mothers, childcare is intimately attached with the female identity, which in turn motivates 'actions that result in the social confirmation of the identity' (Kroska, 1997: 307). Female participants expressed similar views:

I feel that a woman has more responsibility for her children because she's with them more often during the day and at night. I think society expects women to take more part in the upbringing of the child, you're conditioned to that way of thinking. I think because the mother has a maternal instinct and maternal bond more than the father has. (Saima, Female 46)

On the one hand, Saima, a working class British born Pakistani, stresses the influence and expectation society holds for the mother, but on the other hand, she refers to the innateness of the relationship between mother and child. Saima, along with several other female participants (mothers) continuously made references to a 'maternal instinct' and/or 'maternal bond'. The role is conceptualised as an intrinsic aspect of their identity and femininity:

I tell the kids all the time I had youse, you were born inside me! I feel that much more than your father feels. (Nazneen, Female 34)

When I had the children, I felt that I had a bond with them that only a mother could have, I had been pregnant, I had given birth to them. There was this relationship that had built up, for instance if we were both working and one of them was unwell. I would be the one who would stay to look after them, I couldn't go and leave them. (Alison, Female 37)

For both female participants, taking care of children is seen as an instinctive behaviour for mothers. In choosing to describe her role in this way, a woman perceives herself as being true to her nature. However, assumptions about motherhood have implications for women. Uzma (Female, 33), in particular had a traumatic period in attempting to fulfil the feminine ideal:

I actually gave up my work for 9 months. The biggest mistake of my life, because I'm not a home person, it was just the guilt, cause it was my first child I struggled a lot with the role of the mother. The mother should stay at home Islamically, look after the kid, should be teaching them morally all that kinda stuff I find I couldn't do that. The guilt was what will people say, my mum – more my mum I would say and my sister-in-law who are from Pakistan, what would they think, but I know sitting at home wasn't healthy for me either because I wasn't used to it. I fell into depression I had to take anti-

depressants. I felt that I wasn't contributing to society . . . that I was wasting away.

Uzma, a working class British born Pakistani, who had been involved in paid employment since she was 16 she felt confined by the need to 'act' feminine in her role as a mother and becoming a mother meant a considerable transformation both socially and personally. Uzma underwent a process of role relinquishment, a prerequisite for the reallocation of family roles (Hood, 1987). That is, she had to relinquish her working role in order to feel attached to her role as a mother. Although, Hood's (1980) idea of role relinquishment is useful in explaining Uzma's situation, it however should not be considered as a representative account for other women in my sample. Moreover, it is not always appropriate or desirable to transfer the concepts or model applied to one group of sample distinct in experience, practice, race and religion to another. Despite this, like other mothers, Uzma emphasises the different relationship she has with her daughter as a mother from that of her husband:

When my daughter cries it's always me she comes to, even though she's closer to my husband. I think the quality time that I have with them is better during the week when I'm in from work I'm in mummy mode, get them ready, get their dinner ready, after their dinner I sit down with them I chat to them, I read to them, play with them. (Uzma, Female 33)

According to Boyd (2002): if quantity time, like 'being there' and being available when needed, is a virtue of at home mothering: quality time is perhaps the working mother's answer (or defence): when they are there, they are really there for their children' (Boyd, 2002: 466).

## 6.8 'HELPING OUT'

A substantial proportion of male participants in my sample were in full time employment (85%) and some characterised their contribution to domestic work as 'helping out', so there was a separation between primary and secondary duties:

Everyday and ultimate responsibility for marriage, housework, and parenthood usually remains with women: and responsibility for breadwinning usually remains with men. Most women 'help' men with provision, and many men 'help' women with family work and parenting, although partners collude to sustain believe that men are primary providers but parenting is shared. Partners tend to view men's minimal help with raising children as substantial, and women's substantial help with provision as minimal. (Thomson & Walker, 1989: 864)

However, some of the wives of those male participants in my sample (who claimed to share domestic work), were less likely to acknowledge their husband's contribution. As the women explained, the responsibility of domestic work continued to be theirs. According to Hochschild (1989), men's claims that they 'help out' are myths which serve to hide the unequal division of labour in the family. In my research some men exaggerated or claimed to 'help out':

Participant: She [wife] does most of the housework but I help her.

Interviewer: What do you mean by help?

Participant: Cooking sometimes.

Interviewer: Sometimes?

Participant: Yes, not much. (Ahmed, Male 25)

Participant: It all depends on my work commitments if I was off I'd help out.

Interviewer: What do you mean by help out?

Participant: With the kids.

Interviewer: What about domestic chores?

Participant: No, she does it before I get home. (Muhsin, Male 36)

The term 'helping out' was therefore not an accurate reflection to describe the amount of domestic work husbands claimed to perform. The following quotations illustrate the markedly different views held by men and women:

Interviewer: Who does the housework?

Participant: All of us, we all share. (Waqas, Male 24)

Waqas wife, however, contradicted this:

Interviewer: Who does the housework?

Participant: Me. It's shared with my sister-in-law.

Interviewer: Does your husband help out in the housework?

Participant: No, my husband and father-in-law work from 8 till 9. (Maryam, Female 22)

When men did contribute it very often meant that their wife assigned certain tasks for their husband to carry out. When husbands 'help out', their work and progress was observed by the wife. They were treated like children who required constant direction and instruction to perform certain tasks especially in the kitchen or cleaning: 'he does the tidying up, hovering and dusting . . . but he can't do it, I don't think he is able to do it properly' (Zahra, Female 38). These women did not classify the amount of 'work' their husband's carried out as 'helping out', rather they simply highlighted the chores that they sometimes ask them to do. This role, as some believe, is given by Allah and naturally suited to them as women, and therefore

rightfully theirs. As Kauser (Female, 49), who was married to a medical Doctor, and had been a housewife all her married life, said: 'it's not a religious rule that the man has to go out and the woman has to stay at home, but that is the role that Allah has provided for men and women in society'. Although, younger married women attempted to make their husband's carry out specific tasks:

I give him tasks which I think he's capable of doing [laughs] something really basic like putting potatoes in the oven, I know that he won't be able to make chicken or curry that's probably too complicated for him. (Naima, Female 38)

When I was working I still did quite a lot I'll say to him [husband] can you do this, and I'll do this. (Saira, Female 34)

Both Naima and Saira worked in part time jobs and did most, if not all, of the domestic work, therefore, they were not wholly concerned about sharing domestic work because it was something *they* did. The following account reveals how pivotal gender relations in the home are in order to preserve masculine and feminine identities: 'I don't like a man sitting in the house doing the cooking and cleaning' (Fatima, Female 44). Fatima (Iraqi housewife) reference protects her husband's masculinity as 'sitting in the house' is associated with femininity because it implies both passivity and domesticity. Her role as a housewife is used as a measure of her femininity. For such wives, a husband is not expected to contribute in the home particularly in terms of women's work such as cooking, cleaning and laundry (Greenstein, 1996). Muslim men in my research also contrived to restrict their entry into the 'female domain'. The reference of to 'Queendom' (Abbas, Male 50) was employed to characterise and individuate the house as being a feminine domain. According to West & Zimmerman (1987) 'it is not simply that household labor is designated as 'women's work,' but that for a woman to engage in it and a man not to engage in it is to draw on and exhibit the 'essential nature' of each' (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 144). Some of my participants did this by claiming that 'women were more cleaner' by nature than their men:

I'm sure if you refer to science there is a gene in women, they are more tidy, more cleaner. Women are experts on tidiness. (Hameed, Male 50)

My wife does most of it, just because she is taught to do that, she likes to be clean, she likes the house to be tidy. (Saeed, Male 34)

Both men above were middle class and from countries (Kurdistan and Morocco) where it was neither required nor considered appropriate for men to carry out chores within the home. Both were brought up in an environment where the domestic sphere was occupied by females. While some men described women as 'being cleaner', there were females who talked of men as being 'messy':

Men don't see mess the way woman see it, it doesn't bother them the way it bothers women. (Aisha, Female 29)

I do most of the housework . . . my tolerance level is lower than my husbands, is the tolerance a female thing? I don't know, but I can't tolerate mess while he's [husband] completely blind to it most of the time (Sophia, Female 40)

Through wives performing housework and husbands avoiding, it there is an enactment of their femininity and masculinity (Brines, 1994) the following example illustrates this point well:

Interviewer: Do you think men should help out?

Participant: Yes, why not, if it is possible but to a limit to which he doesn't lose everything, because a lady should have respect on their own. (Hameed, Male 50)

For Hameed, who was a senior lecturer at a university, by performing 'women's work' the man may be subjected to the loss of his masculine status and dignity (Duindam, 1999). Indeed, 'to do otherwise would violate his own beliefs about the appropriateness of men doing women's work' (Greenstein, 1996: 587). Hameed, therefore sees housework as a symbolic display of femininity and womanhood and sees minimal participation by the husband as a way of retaining his masculine status. Despite this, some participants cited the example of Prophet Muhammad who helped his wives by contributing to housework. Since Aisha (one of Prophet Muhammad's wives) relates that 'the Prophet used to mend his shoes, sew his clothes and work in his household just as one works in one's own house. She also reported that he was a man among men who used to patch his clothes, milk his goats and engage in work' (Kabbani & Bakhtiar, 1998: 5). Some participants made reference to this:

The Prophet showed that there shouldn't be gender distinctions in household chores. (Sadia, Female 36)

The Prophet despite the fact that he was out of the house giving *da'wa* [missionary work], working, earning a livelihood, leading the *Ummah*, he



would come home and still do various things. He darned his own socks, he cooked, cleaned round the house. (Yasir, Male 37)

Yet, Yasir, a working class male who was born in Britain and married for 12 years, admitted to doing very little work in the house. Therefore, what emerges is a 'discrepancy between prescriptive beliefs about division of household labor and actual behaviour' (Berardo, et al., 1987: 381). The term 'helping out' is often limited to each individual's idea of what he/she considers to be 'helping out'. As Huma (Female, 38) puts it: 'I call sharing when the other person themselves knows what they should do'. There are distinct realms marked by sex and as a result there is never a blurring of gender roles.

#### 6.8.1 'SHARING'

There were a few exceptions amongst participants who reported sharing domestic work, 11% said that domestic work was shared. Although some stated that domestic work was shared there were examples of the unevenness in the tasks performed:

I think my wife does more of it, I tend to do all the shopping, I manage the bills and miscellaneous things. It's shared in that it's not all or nothing. If you're asking me who does more it's probably 70/30. We have somebody coming in once a fortnight to come and clean the house, she organised that, she takes control of that. She does the cooking, and we have somebody in for that occasionally. (Farooq, Male 40)

Farooq and his wife were a middle class couple and were able to afford domestic help. They had been married for 11 years and had only one child. Farooq, because of this, was 'effectively excused from making contributions to housework . . . [as] the predominant pattern of sharing becomes one in which the housework is shared between the female household partner and a low-paid female employee or employees' (Kynaston, 1996: 233). As his wife Huma stated: 'I do the cooking, cleaning and ironing, my husband helps as well, but since I've had my daughter he's taken a step backwards. I would like it to be more shared' (Huma, Female 38). In the presence of young children, there is a substantial increase in the amount of housework a woman performs (e.g. cooking, cleaning and laundry) (Ellison & Bartkowski, 2002). The length of time married also appeared to be a factor. Couples like Haider and Khadija, a middle class childless couple who had been married for 8 years, and Humaira and Bilal, a working class couple who had only been married for 4 years and had one child, were still in the process of negotiating their gender roles. Both couples expressed a desire for fairness and balance. The occupational position of the wife had an influence on their

husband's participation. Haider (Male, 32) and Khadija (Female, 27) felt that sharing was necessary to adapt to the changes in lifestyle due to Khadija's job as a medical Doctor who was training to be a surgeon. For them, their economic and employment situation encouraged a more equal participation and a distinct reversal had taken place:

My husband is probably better at housework than I am. When I come home the last thing I want to do is the housework. My husband never made me feel that housework was my domain.

In a similar vein Humaira (Female 29) stated:

I believe it should be an equal role between husband and wife, I'm not well, I don't keep well right now, I'm pregnant my husband does most of the cooking and cleaning he does most of the housework. If I'm in the mood today I'll do the cooking but mainly it's him, that's what I believe I think it should be balanced especially if both are working.

Nazneen (Female 34), a working class married mother of 3 girls, contested the role of the domesticated wife. Her situation is also an example of how women's increasing pay and status in the paid labour market devalues housework (Robinson & Milkie, 1998) and forces a shift in her domestic role. In the following extract she demonstrates how the household is an arena for negotiation:

He [husband] phoned me yesterday while I was out buying socks; I'm coming home early for a reason because I've got a presentation to type up for Uni tomorrow. He phoned me and said: "can you iron me a shirt and a pair of trousers", straight away alarm bells rang! And I just said "right ok bye". When he came home, I said "you can't do that to me, you can't just assume that I'm coming home early for nothing I'm coming home early because I've got a couple of phone calls to make I'm not here to become domesticated" and he just let it go. I did a few bits of pieces and made my phone calls and then when he was in the shower he asked me again "I hope you don't mind can you please iron me a pair of trousers" I said "right I'm not doing anything I don't mind".

Nazneen's anger and frustration was aimed at her husband's assumption that she would play the role of 'the dutiful wife'. She was determined 'not to play it anymore' or to 'become domesticated', she goes on further:

It takes a lot of work on my part, he's [husband] not like that by nature, he's become that way because of the line of the work that I do, I've fought for rights for women.

Nazneen contested the image of the 'good wife' with its traditional feminine association with domestic work. Nonetheless, not all men happily admitted the amount of work they performed: 'I would say it's 50/50 between me, my husband and my brother-in-law, they clean the windows, they Hoover, they are set chores' (Uzma, Female 33). Her husband however offered a different account:

Interviewer: Who does the housework?

Participant: My wife.

Interviewer: Do you help out?

Participant: I've been here for 11 years and I've changed a wee bit, but sometimes when I feel like it me and my brother will give her [wife] a hand, not because she wants it, but because we think it's ok, it's a two minute job. (Kamran, Male 29)

Kamran, who was educated up to college level, trivialises housework with his 'it's a two minute job' comment. There is also an element of devaluing housework (Demo & Acock, 1993; Ross, 1987), his indifference demonstrates his choice to 'help' not his wife's insistence on sharing. That is, he is under no obligation, instruction (by his wife) or duty to share domestic work. His indifference may conceivably be read as a threat to his masculinity where he feels it is degrading to acknowledge his presence in what he regards and conceives of as 'female space'. The realities of life in the 'West' has made it difficult for him and his wife to maintain strict Muslim/cultural (Pakistani) gender roles. They are both aware of the shift of power in the relationship, Uzma possess more power in getting her husband to share domestic chores through her bargaining power as her financial contribution is greater than her husband's. This supports the idea that 'the greater the wife's power, the greater her success in delegating some of the housework to her husband' (Ross, 1987: 817). In contrast, Kamran contrives to match this arrangement of sharing with his previous traditional ideology, explaining his unwillingness to admit to the amount of work he does in the house. According to Kroska (1997):

People sometimes play a role in their family that is not consistent with their gender role ideology. That is, people's experience in the family is sometimes incompatible with their ideologically grounded expectations and preferences for their place in the family, particularly their participation in housework and childcare. (Kroska, 1997: 304)

Kamran's gender role ideology is inconsistent with the role he is playing due to his wife's greater economic power. Perhaps most noteworthy is Haroon (Male, 36) and Sadia's (Female, 36) situation, where both stated that they shared domestic chores. Haroon as a house

husband spent much of the day looking after the children. He integrates care work with masculinity, yet not housework: 'being at home for me it's not easy in the sense that if I had to do everything in the house, I wouldn't be able to do it, I couldn't do it all the cleaning at once, I think women are better they are multifaceted'. Brandth & Kvande (1998) similarly found in their study of married Norwegian couples who shared parental leave, that there is a redistribution and redefinition of what constitutes domestic work, childcare and the quality of the housework. They point out that the majority of men 'exclude housework and are allowed to be fathers in their own ground, this displays their power of authority and exposes their relative domination in the relationship' (Brandth & Kvande, 1998: 310-311). Haroon (Male, 36) distances himself from housework and deems it important to state that it was his choice to stay home to care for his children, and as a result he is an 'active father, not a housewife' (Brandth & Kvande, 1998: 310-311). His wife Sadia (Female 36), a middle class professional, sheds light on their domestic arrangement:

Probably I would say 90% of the time if anybody is to cook it'll be me that does it, once in a while my husband does it. When I'm working full-time Haroon [husband] always puts the rubbish out and always does the dishes. He's cooked for the children when needs be . . . like when I'm at work and they need to be fed before they go to bed. If for example there's a necessity to get things cleared up and we decide that's what we're going to do we might get together and do it or I'll ask if he could do something and in that respect we tidy up but he tends to do it most of the time and maybe even putting the washing up, so that turns out to be quite a bit.

Sadia's last comment is interesting because she appears to be grateful to her husband for his contribution despite acknowledging that she is responsible for much of the cooking and that when they clean they tend to do it 'together'. This is because she believes that domestic work is her duty and responsibility. The gratitude is expressed because the husband's 'contribution to such tasks crosses traditional gender lines' and is 'perceived as involving a special effort by husbands to be 'fair'' (Blair & Johnson, 1992: 572). Brandth & Kvande (1998) also found that fathers who 'have changed places with the mothers . . . have become the 'avant garde' fathers to whom the mothers feel grateful' (Brandth & Kvande, 1998: 305). This 'economy of gratitude' (Hochschild 1989) relates to how individuals define what should be expected of them as men and women. Since Sadia considers her husband's contribution as a favour to her, she is grateful to her husband and appreciates his contribution. Instead of reversing roles, Sadia continues to undertake much of the domestic chores as well as being the sole breadwinner. Returning to the topic later in the interview, she concedes that: 'I would say

that I still end up doing most of it or it's left partly undone and things that are essential like feeding the children . . . certain chores are all done by me'. Their situation is interesting as one would expect that the husband, who is no longer the financial provider, should increase his contribution to domestic work. Haroon, because he is unable to display his masculinity through paid labour will demonstrate his masculinity through evading housework chores, which he associates with femininity. Indeed 'the more a husband relies on his wife for economic support, the less housework he does.

Haroon and Sadia support the implicit assumption that the wife should accept the responsibility for housework. According to Orbuch & Eyster (1997) 'when a wife achieves external resources equal to or greater than those of her husband, her dependency on her husband decreases, she attains more 'status' in the eyes of others, and she tends to develop a sense of entitlement to equity in the home' (Orbuch & Eyster, 1997: 302). Although this was demonstrated in Uzma, Humaira and Khadija's situation, whereby their careers and financial independence allowed them a degree of parity in the household, for a significant number of women, a deeply entrenched idea blurs the issue of equity in the household. While a woman may voluntarily engage in employment, the financial responsibility and maintenance of the family is the husband's<sup>3</sup> (Doi, 1984, 1989). Therefore, for a large number of women in my sample, gaining 'external resources' does not weaken their domestic position. The issue of equity is also undermined as the manifested reciprocal roles demand that expectations of one role correspond with the expectations of the other: the male is given his place and the female hers (Dahl, 1997). Given this, Muslims are provided with a strong sense of place within the family (Nasr, 1975) which may conceivably create a clearer understanding and appreciation of one's identity. Although some of my participants based their understanding of gender roles on the concept of complementarity, in reality they were not bound rigidly by the idea of discrete gender roles. Predelli (2004) found in her study of migrant women in Oslo:

The lines are challenged and contested most importantly by women who participate in the labor market but also by men who take on duties in the home. . . ambiguities are found in the discourses of immigrant Muslim women who experience mixed pressures of careers, motherhood, and housework (Predelli, 2004: 490)

While it is true that most of my female participants were involved in domestic work and men in full time employment, at the same time, women worked full and part time yet shared the

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Qur'an 4:32.

financial responsibility with their spouse. There were male participants who were also situated in the traditionally 'feminine' domestic realm, men also 'helped' their wives in domestic chores albeit minimally. Therefore, although male and female participants projected clear and strict boundaries between public and private the reality of their lives, and the roles they played (interchangeably) revealed a blurring of these boundaries.

## 6.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I examined female and male participants' constructions of femininity, there was considerable overlap in the views of male and female participants. For instance, the majority of male participants believed that femininity was an essential innate quality. The underlying belief and appraisal of femininity was based on the sexual division of labour, the complementary roles of the sexes and female subordination to the male household head. Women described femininity as involving being emotional, caring and loving. Men also characterised women as soft, fragile, and gentle, qualities which strengthened or were used to enhance their own masculine role as protectors, leaders and guardians. There was a strong belief that because women are biologically able to procreate, Allah has created them as more caring, nurturing, peaceful, patient, understanding and compassionate. Femininity and feminine behaviour was influenced and shaped in the division of labour, in dress, in manners, and in social and religious functioning. Both male and female participants saw women as symbols of purity and passiveness: their feminine identity was formed and shaped by its complementary role to the masculine identity. A woman's femininity, it was argued by both male and female participants, involved her entire body, her behaviour, her dress and her voice and the *hijab* served a dual purpose, not only was it an essential tool for female protection, but it also protected the men from their own sexual urge and desire.

Some male participants portrayed the male as a victim of his masculine sexual energy which could be inflamed by women who expressed their sexuality in their clothes, behaviour and voice. By wearing the *hijab*, a woman gains praise and respect from men because she deters men from acting out their sexual urges. The public display of the female body was not acceptable. Male and female participants condemned 'other' or 'outlaw' woman (French, 1985) women for failing to uphold this ideal. Thus, the pious 'inlaw' woman was frequently juxtaposed with the immodest wanton woman or 'outlaw' woman. It should be noted that not all female participants agreed with all of the above. A minority of female participants believed that femininity and feminine dress did not express a deeper natural feminine identity, rather it

reflected and reinforced the socially constructed notion of femininity. For some women, appearance was central to their understanding of femininity; clothes, make-up, weight, sensualness and allurements were identifiers of their feminine identity. These female participants did not conceive of femininity as a natural concept, rather it required attention and a labour of production (Tyler, 2003). Indeed, in their definition and description of femininity, these women acknowledged that women 'do gender'. If one 'does' gender, how can gender naturally induce a set of behavioural characteristics particular to women?

'Western' feminism does not possess the ideological power to explain the experiences of Muslim women, nor does it provide them with an emancipatory message freeing them from the 'constraints' of motherhood or marriage. Nevertheless, some of their theories were clearly applicable to the views of some of my female participants, because not all women accepted femininity as a 'natural', Allah given quality. Some women evoked conflicting and shifting constructions of themselves as feminine women and thus challenged the idea of femininity being a static and essential attribute of the female identity. Some participants recognised that definitions of and the manifestation of femininity were solely in relational terms: wife, mother, sister, daughter. The fulfilment of femininity was thus through sexual passivity, loving service to their husband and children, and dependence on men. It is not only men who produce idealised representations of women, but some women also reproduce an exalted femininity. Though the wearing of the *hijab* was for some a clear indication of male control over the female body, it was also a method to reinforce gender ideologies and categories.

In the final section of the chapter, I examined the position of woman in the domestic sphere. It was evident from the literature based on 'Western' people that the social conditions of women in the 'West' have changed considerably, yet their primary domestic role remains the same. Evidence from my research supports this idea. The females in my sample remain bound by the domestic ideology which shapes their experiences in both the private (domestic chores) and the public sphere (employment status). Women appeared to invest more of their time in housework and their full time employment status had little or no influence as they continued to bear both the responsibility for family and home care. Despite some participants maintaining that housework was shared, this was not always on equal terms. Women continued to perform those tasks considered 'woman's work' (cooking, cleaning and washing). According to Sanchez & Thomson (1997) an equal division of domestic work is dependant on the couple's willingness to rework traditional beliefs about masculine and feminine marital

responsibilities. Yet, if there is an essential belief that men and women are naturally disposed to certain work, then reworking those traditional ideas is difficult to achieve. Although references were made to Prophet Muhammad and his help in domestic work, this strengthened the idea of 'helping out' (men assisting women on occasions). This did not imply an equal distribution of domestic chores between the husband and wife. Therefore, the gendered division of labour remained.

The idea that women are men's financial responsibility was an unquestioned belief amongst many participants. Yet, only 7 of my female participants were housewives, the remaining 28 were either in full time/part time work or were university/school students. Nevertheless, the foundation of this arrangement is not weakened when women are economically independent. The idea about the home being a feminine domain is entrenched in both male and female understandings of the feminine role. My research suggests a number of issues similar to research on domestic work. That is, a clear division of labour exists in the organisation, arrangement and performance of domestic chores. Regardless of the women's employment status, the dual responsibility for housework and childcare influences their choice to engage in paid labour or to reduce their hours (full time to part time). With the exception of 4 males (who were either retired or students), all male participants were currently employed full time. Although men perceived themselves to be the breadwinners, this ignored the fact that their wives also helped financially through their employment. A deeply entrenched assumption in the psyche of Muslim men and women is that women should be responsible for the performance of household and familial tasks. My study reveals that domestic work continues to be marked by a distinct segregation of spaces. Both religion and socialisation appear to have a significant impact in way Muslims construct male and female position within the home. My research calls for the need of more research to be undertaken which adequately considers the experiences of women from an ethnic and religious background. Researchers in the future must be aware of the differences in family structure and ideology. Further research must also portray the multi-faceted nature of Muslim family. It is quite evident that the difference between the present research and much of the previous work captures interestingly different dimensions of domestic work. In the next chapter I examine the sociological literature on masculinity and follow this with an exploration of 'Muslim masculinity' according to traditional Muslim scholars and Islamic feminists.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### MASCULINITY

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

A full understanding of gender will only emerge with an examination of the role of men and the construction of masculinity in addition to the work that has been done on women and the construction of femininity. In this chapter, my aim is to review the concept of masculinity/masculinities in sociology. I begin by examining and reviewing previous and contemporary literature on the topic of masculinity and masculinities. In order to lay the groundwork of understanding masculinity, it is important to look at some key verses in the Qur'an and the *hadith* to see how it contributes to Muslim men's understanding about their gender identity and role. I detail how theories on masculinity in the 'West' have identified and understood the concept. I examine the shift from essentialist accounts towards a social constructivist perspective. Following on from this, I examine masculinity in Islam. I describe and discuss a number of themes: how the Qur'an conceives of the creation of humankind and whether this influences ideas about roles and responsibility. How does the Qur'an and *hadith* describe the male's responsibility in the home and society? How does this impact on the principle of equality between the sexes? How do traditional Muslim scholars justify the discourse of complementarity and men's position? How do and modern scholars challenge these ideas? Does the interpretation of gender roles by traditional and modernist Muslim scholars differ from sociological interpretations in the 'West'?

In chapter 8, I examine the construction of masculinity by my male participants. Do participants encourage or promote particular masculine qualities? If so, what are they? I am also interested in the way women perceive and construct their ideas about masculinity. Are there any differences between male and female participants in their views on masculinity? This is important, given that masculinity in sociology is often characterised in isolation without women. I examine how male and female participants construct the position of the 'head' of the family. How do both male and female participants justify men's 'superior' position within the family? If men are empowered by the position as the head then this raises a number of interesting questions about identity and agency. What do both male and female participants perceive to be the origin of this role, religion or culture? Is this position also open to women when roles are reversed?

## 7.2 A REVIEW OF MASCULINITY/MASCULINITIES IN SOCIOLOGY

In this section of the chapter, I take a closer look at some of the studies which have dominated in the research of masculinity in the 'Western' sociology. I begin by examining historical and contemporary work on masculinity in sociology, paying particular attention to the different approaches adopted to understanding the concept. This literature review is neither lengthy nor exhaustive as I have been selective and chosen studies I feel are related to my research. There have been three major tendencies in the study of gender in sociology: some studies have sought to expand our knowledge of the socially constructed 'nature' of gender; others examine how concepts of gender shape and are shaped by practices and discourses; while others have investigated the construction of desire and sexuality through gender. These different perspectives correspond with particular periods. Masculinity, for the purpose of this research is defined as the social construct comprising of values and qualities that are commonly associated with the male sex.

### 7.2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Very little research had been undertaken on men before the 1950s in the 'West' (Whitehead, 2001). In the 1930s, sex role theory was established in psychology when Terman & Miles (1936) postulated that masculinity and femininity are constructed as two opposing types of 'personality'. Similarly, in Sociology Parsons' (1955) work on the 'role' was a central constructive concept of the social sciences formed in the 1930s and was directly applied to gender. Parsons addressed sex roles as instrumental (located them in the public world) and expressive (care and nurture of family members), a distinction that functioned within the conjugal family. He conceptualised the conjugal family as a small group and as the specific agency of the larger society assigned with the task of socialising the young. Parsons account of the allocation of roles by gender is rooted in childbirth. The basic explanation of the assignment of roles for men and women is based on the assumption that giving birth and the early nursing of children creates a strong bond between the mother and child. Conversely, because the male is exempt from this female biological function, he should concentrate on the opposite instrumental role (Parsons & Bales, 1955). The division of public from private amplifies the distinction of sex roles. Thus, Parsons' theory of 'the family' is in essence a theory of gender. Parsons analysed the achievement of sex roles as an issue of the production across generations of what may be referred to as 'gender personalities'. Women were given the 'expressive' role, while men were assigned an 'instrumental' role. These assigned gender roles would, in Parsons' view, maintain stability within the family and society.

He adopted the theory of structural functionalism in order to explain gender differentiation (Rogers, 2001: 42). Structural functionalism presumes that the different gender roles for men and women display distinct but complementary functions, working mutually to make society 'work' efficiently. By dividing functions (expressive and instrumental), each gender makes its contribution to the harmonious running of social organization (Rogers, 2001). According to this theory, 'each gender gains a gendered identity - both competence in and commitment to the role appropriate to their gender' (Rogers, 2001: 42). He categorised men according to their instrumental 'nature', thus, the masculine personality is more inclined towards instrumental needs, functions, and interests, while the feminine personality is largely involved in expressive needs, functions and interests. From this, he deduced that men would assume more practical, managerial and 'judicial roles', while women would tend to be more caring, integrative and involved in 'tension-managing' roles (Carrigan, et al., 1985). The research which followed explained masculinity using the 'male sex role theory'. The fundamental basis of his analysis of gender is not relation, but always separation. His supposition on the relationship between the two sex roles is one of complementarity, not authority or control. Indeed, 'the role theory framework masked questions of power and material inequality; or worse, implied that women and men were 'separate but equal' (Carrigan, et al., 1985: 559).

There was severe criticism for the 'male sex-role theory' because of its generalisation and for its inadequacy to address issues relating to power (i.e. the disparity in power between men and women). Sex role theory was not very informative in analysing power, contradiction and change (Hearn, 1996). It also served as a 'way of accommodating departures from the normative standard case, through the concept of deviance' (Connell, 1987:52). Both the inflexibility and the ambiguity of the concept guaranteed an abundant number of 'deviants' but little understanding relating to the effects of power and conflict of power. Research and writing on men's roles shifted significantly and rose considerably from the late 1960s. From the 1960s onwards, research on men shifted from arguments based on the psychological and biological differences between the sexes towards explanations of a macro sociological character including an account of the role of society in the process of creating gender hierarchies and division (Carrigan et al., 1985). Much of the work produced on masculinity in the 1970s noted that men are subjugated in a manner similar to women. This oppression emerged from the male role, which, through its demands of fulfilment, burdens and oppresses men. This marked a shift in the research on both men and women, gender was seen as 'the social sex'. In the 1970s, there was an acknowledgment that humans are gendered beings

whose daily practices and experiences are dependent on their gender (Smiler, 2004). The rise of the feminist movement was also a catalyst for change in the direction of research. For feminists, masculinity was expressed in the oppression of women and 'other' groups of men (homosexuals, blacks). The feminist theory and the feminist movement were profoundly influential in emphasising the idea of and desirability for men to change.

Since the 1970s, sex has been separated from gender to distinguish the biological from the social. 'Sex' refers to a biological classification and gender refers to the behaviour considered appropriate to each sex. It is precisely this 'division of gender into femininity and masculinity that reduces gender to sex' (West & Fenstermaker, 1993). The process of gender construction and socialisation which transforms raw human material into social beings serves one major function, it prepares the individual for the role he/she is to play, providing him/her with the necessary repertoire of habits, beliefs and values. Following the 1970s, masculinity was conceived as being composed of a set of socially constructed qualities. However, it was also a form of ideology: it involved a way of self-identification and provided a set of cultural ideals that define appropriate roles, values and expectations for and of men. At its most basic, being masculine means holding male values and following male behaviour norms' (Sexton, 1969, cited in Carrigan et al., 1987: 75).

As a cultural construct, there are several relatively rigid requirements of masculinity which preserves and maintains its 'status'. Thus, attempts were often made to create a universal ideal of what it means 'to be a man'. Brannon's (1976) work articulated the view that the variety of expectations and beliefs about men are based upon a small number of core concepts of masculinity. He found four central themes essential: (a) 'no sissy stuff' – the avoidance of all feminine behaviours and traits; (b) 'the big wheel' – the attainment of success, status and breadwinning capability; (c) 'the sturdy oak' – strength, confidence and independence; and (d) 'give'em hell' – aggression, violence and daring (Brannon, 1976, cited in Ciccone & Ruble, 1978: 5). Although he valued and explored the significance of the traditional definition of masculinity, not only are these core concepts still relevant but they continue to be an important tool to measure men's masculinity. Irrespective of this, conceptualising masculinity as a definitive standard of male behaviour loses sight of the fact that masculinity differs markedly in context, across cultures and societies (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994). Hence, masculine behaviour responds, adapts and adjusts according to societal/cultural norms and values. For that reason, masculine behaviour must be seen in relation to the structure and

dynamics of the individual personality, or viewed in relation to the organisation and functioning of culture and society. Yet, a review of the literature in the study of masculinity reveals the discourse as dynamic and complex.

The essentialist argument involves the idea 'that men and women are different from each other, from the gene to the thought to the act, and that the emotions that underpin masculinity and femininity, that make reality as experienced by the male eternally different from that experienced by the female, flow from the biological natures of man and woman' (Goldberg, 1993: 228). Social constructivism, however, which has dominated since the 1970s, proffers the idea that society's influence is essential to any discussion about what it 'means to be a man'. Social and cultural aspects shape, produce and inscribe appropriate roles and behaviours for men to enact and display. As Segal (1993) points out: 'masculinity, as any type of inner essence, is a fiction, or set of fictions – however real, perhaps disastrously real, men's attempt to live out these fictions may be' (Segal, 1993: 630). In the 1980s, the idea of masculinity as a social construct was firmly entrenched in the sociological literature on gender. West and Zimmerman (1987) argued that gender was a performance: 'an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct' (West and Zimmerman, 1987:126). They go on further to argue that 'gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort' (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 129). 'Doing gender' entails a reciprocal process where men and women display gender and become aware about what is considered appropriate gender behaviour. Research from a social constructionist perspective reveals that when we address the issue of gender, we must remind ourselves that: a) masculinity and femininity are socially created; b), the gender concepts of masculine and feminine evolve, despite being identifiable; and c) gender constructs provide a collective, rather than personal definition. Thus, gender was no longer conceived of in terms of a belief in absolute human behaviour, rather it was a continuum, which varies according to culture, values, religion, race and sexuality.

According to Brittan (1989), what supports and preserves ideas about gender roles is the ideology of 'masculinism'. He argues that it is difficult to give credence to those accounts, which emphasise contextuality, because very often masculinity is glorified and exalted. He argues that when we speak of masculinity as an essence, as an inherent quality, we blur masculinity with masculinism, that is, the masculine ideology. He defines masculinism as 'the ideology that justifies and naturalises male domination. As such, it is the ideology of

patriarchy. This ideology assumes there is an essential difference between men and women but also that heterosexuality is natural. Masculinism also characterises non-heterosexual relationships as an aberration and deviant. In general, masculinity refers to all those qualities and activities that provide a sense of maleness to a human being (Brod, 1987). These qualities also serve to distinguish 'real men' from 'others' (women, children, men of 'colour', and homosexual men/women). However, as MacInnes (1998) comments, definitions of masculinity frequently involve a collection of attributes considered to be comprised of masculine qualities or traits such as competitiveness, aggressiveness and emotional detachment, distinguishable from its opposite, femininity (passivity, emotionality, cooperativeness and so on). Parsons argued in the 1950s that masculinity was contingent upon a set of traits, which gave men a masculine identity. According to MacInnes (1998), remnants of this perspective remain. Therefore, although scholars dismiss essentialism, masculinity is related and described as if it possesses a determinable, unique essence. Masculinity is a concept which does not have a clear empirical definition, and those traits that are identifiable merely represent 'tendencies and possibilities that individuals have more or less access to at different points in time, and coexist in an uneasy and messy alliance' (MacInnes, 1998: 15).

The advantage of the social constructionist approach is that it adequately theorises the role of power relations in the construction of masculinity. Social construction theories also permit an understanding of the ways in which dominant forms of masculinity change with other shifts in gender relations and economic organisation. Feminist and gay scholarship and politics were highly influential in heralding a climate of change. In particular, it raised awareness of the oppression created by the ideology of masculinism against women and 'other' ('subordinated') men. In recent years, however, the term masculinity has come under severe criticism and attack. For example, Jeff Hearn (1996) asks 'Is masculinity dead?' claiming that during the 1990s, the concept of masculinity/masculinities has gradually lost its conceptual edge, having become far too general. Therefore, Hearn (1996) is:

Unsure of the usefulness of the concept of masculinity/masculinities in critically studying men. There are a number of problems with the concept of masculinity or, more accurately, with the way the concept is used. They include the wide variety of uses of the concept, its use as a shorthand for a very wide range of social phenomena and in particular those that are connected with men and males but which appear to be located in the individual (Hearn, 1996: 203).

In recognition of the criticism of the term 'masculinity', many sociologists (Whitehead, 2001; Clatterbaugh, 1998; Hearn, 1996; Brod & Kaufman, 1994) support the idea that there are multiple ways to be masculine or that 'masculinities' exist. Theories and scales described a single stereotypical masculine form often specifying what masculinity was (and what it was not). However, to produce a concrete definition of the term proves to be a fruitless task because, in recent years, the term 'masculinity' has been weakened and its value as an analytical tool overridden by its plural 'masculinities'. Brod and Kaufman (1994), claim that there is an emerging second wave of critical studies on men and masculinities which focuses and recognises that a theorisation of masculinity should entail an explanation and articulation of relations of power, that is, it should be more attentive to diversity. This 'second wave' is also characterised by a recognition that masculinity cannot be studied as a singular concept, 'as if the stuff of man were a homogenous and unchanging thing' (Brod & Kaufman, 1994: 4). Moreover, they 'wish to emphasize the plurality and diversity of men's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, situations, practices, and institutions along lines of race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, region, physical appearance, able-bodiedness, mental ability, and various other categories with which we describe our lives and experiences' (Brod & Kaufman, 1994: 4-5).

Indeed, various social groups and cultures create their own understanding of masculinity and masculine behaviour, which is contingent upon their own cultural beliefs, social values and religion thus meriting a shift from a unitary model to a multiple model of masculinity. This ultimately creates a situation where it is unrealistic to speak of a unitary standard or model of masculinity and masculine behaviour. Clatterbaugh (1998) points out we have no set of measures for distinguishing how many 'distinct' masculinities are present in any given group of people. Therefore, it is not plausible given the wealth, historicity and vitality of gender representations to speak of masculinity in the singular. Instead, masculinities are plural and multi-dimensional, they diverge over space and time, and are, thus, unavoidably entangled with other influential and powerful variables including sexuality, class, age and ethnicity (Whitehead, 2001). There is not one masculine mode but a variety of modalities and masculinities that are not only different but often contradictory because:

This distinction ['Masculinities' rather than simply 'masculinity'] is merely an extension of the effort to study men as a specific gendered group . . . at different times, in different places and cultures men have experienced their lives differently and have lived under different norms of appropriate behaviour. To speak of

masculinities in the plural reminds of the diversity of men's experiences (Boyd et al., 1996: xv).

There also appears to be a need to conceive of possible alternatives for thinking and conceptualising the 'masculine' and to take account 'intricate background factors' (Barrett, 2000), such as class and racial differences. These factors in turn challenge a monolithic perspective of masculinity amongst heterosexual as well as homosexual men (Nardi, 2000). Gay men too 'exhibit a multiplicity of 'doing' masculinity that can be best described by the plural for masculinities' (Nardi, 2000: 1). In essence, speaking of 'masculinities' in the plural is a means of drawing attention to the fact that there are various ways of being masculine. This important analytical change is integral to understanding both the social and relational differences (Kimmel, 2001) between men and the cultural relativity of the term (Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994; Harris, 1995).

Still, it should be borne in mind that some studies, in particular literature dating back to the 1970s as well as work in theology, continues to employ the singular term of masculinity. The term used in this thesis is 'masculinity'. I have adopted the singular term for a number of reasons. Firstly, the term masculinities implies a comparison to 'other' men (marked by race and sexuality). The purpose of my thesis is to examine men's position within the family, in marriage, in society and in religion. Therefore, I am examining what masculinity means in relation to femininity. Although the experience of men and their understanding of masculinity is not a uniform one, I highlight the similarities in the discourse provided by men to define masculinity and their own masculine identity. I do not believe that this will offer a narrow perspective. The replacement of masculinity with the plural concept of masculinities emerged to highlight that there are hierarchies among men (Petersen, 2003) and therefore, various ways 'to be a man'. In this study, I use the term masculinity, principally in order to develop a more detailed approach to the concept of masculinity from a Muslim perspective. In this chapter, I am concerned with the hierarchies and divisions between men and women and as such will approach the subject using the unitary term of masculinity. This however, does not mean that I do not recognise the existence of Muslim masculinities (Ouzgane & Shirazi, 2004).

#### 7.2.2 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

The hierarchical structure of masculinity is explicated by Connell's (1995) work on hegemonic masculinity. His work is an essential reference point for research on men and masculinity. Connell first discussed the idea of 'hegemonic masculinity' in 'Men's Bodies' (1979), involving



debates on patriarchy. He later used the concept to review the use and adoption of the term by functionalists. The concept was further elaborated and explicated by Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985), in reaction to gay activism. Hegemonic masculinity, they argue, was a way to question 'how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance' (Carrigan et al., 1985: 92). They addressed issues concerning power and gender relations. They also endeavoured 'to distance themselves, and ultimately the sociology of masculinity, from the concept of 'male sex role', men's studies approach, and neutrality in respect of a critique of men's power' (Kerfoot & Whitehead, 1998: 3). Connell (1995) states that 'gender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practice reduced to the body' (Connell, 1995: 71). Social practice interrelates with and is receptive to particular situations in addition to being produced within clear structures of social relations. Indeed, Connell believes that gender relations are one of the major methods to categorise structures of societies. When we discuss masculinity and femininity, we are in fact referring to configurations of gender practice, thus masculinity (and femininity) are gender projects which Connell (1995) defines as the 'processes of configuring practice through time, which transform their starting-points in gender structures' (Connell, 1995: 72). For Connell, gender relations are structured around three particular modes: power relations, production relations and cathexis (emotional attachment). Firstly, gender relations involve the submissiveness of women and the control of men (patriarchy). Secondly, production relations refer to the gender division of labour: the advantage men gain from unequal shares of the product (gendered character of capital). Lastly, cathexis (emotional attachment): the gendered 'nature' of sexual desire, and the practices that shape that desire. This is evident in men's dominant heterosexual position.

Connell (1995) rejects traditional understandings of masculinity as the sex-appropriate norms that males learn through socialisation or the different psychological attributes that discern males from females. For Connell, 'masculinity' is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture' (Connell, 1995: 71). Connell's approach makes it possible to examine subordinate masculinities and the experiences of stigmatisation and marginalisation of men in this category. He recognises that forms of masculinity can be identified on the basis of general, social, cultural and institutional patterns of power and meaning. Connell describes four masculinities: hegemonic masculinity and the

less dominant forms of masculinity: complicit, subordinate and marginalised. In 'Masculinities' (1995) Connell discusses in detail the concept of hegemonic masculinity. He uses Antonio Gramsci's analysis of economic class relations. Hegemonic masculinity is 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Connell, 1995: 77). It is the revered form of masculinity which acts to 'stabilize a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order' (Connell, 1990: 93).

It is important to point out that hegemonic masculinity may only represent a small number of men. However, men in general can claim privilege and benefit simply by virtue of being male, through 'the patriarchal dividend', that is, the advantage men gain from the subordination of women (Connell, 1995). Connell categorises this as complicitous masculinities, a great number of men are 'complicit' in maintaining the hegemonic model (Carrigan et al., 1985). They reap patriarchal dividends without operating on the frontline. Subordinate masculinity is the antithesis of hegemonic masculinity, the latter suppresses and subjugates the former. As Connell puts it, subordinated masculinity is excluded from the arena of masculine legitimacy. Finally, marginalized masculinities ensue from 'the interplay of gender with other structures such as class and race' (Connell, 1995: 80). The masculinities of subordinate groups will constantly be dependent on the authority of the dominant group (hegemonic masculinity), they are thus prevented from reaping the benefits of patriarchal dividend. Homosexual men are subordinated because, as Connell explains, their gender practices conflict with the hegemonic configuration, and thus, are excluded from gaining patriarchal dividends (Connell, 1995: 78-79). Connell advises that these 'types' of masculinities are gender practices. They are not personality types or actual male characters, but rather a set of regulatory social norms. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity exists within the patriarchal structure where men possess and control the dominant position in the relation between the sexes. In such established rules and norms, 'femininity and masculinity are defined in terms of each other, socialising us to take on reciprocal identities and roles' (Mowrey, 1996: 118). Contained within this understanding is that to 'be a man' is to have sexual desires for women; to 'be a man' is to complement the woman. Kimmel (1987) describes the relational aspect of the masculinity with respect to femininity:

Masculinity and femininity are relational constructs . . . although 'male' and 'female' may have some universal characteristics . . . one cannot understand

the social construction of either masculinity or femininity without reference to the other (Kimmel, 1987: 12).

In this respect, heterosexuality presumes masculinity and femininity, thus the latter has been created in accordance with the former, hence, complimenting one another. Masculinity then, is a social construct that is concretely rooted in comparison to femininity. Connell (1992) in a similar vein, argues that the importance of using masculinities is the recognition it gives to the relational character of gender. Not only are different masculinities formed in relation to other masculinities (Connell, 1992), but it is difficult to detach masculinity from femininity (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994). Gender is relational (Bird, 1996), the former exists only in relation to the latter (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002). The notion of masculinity as involving a set of discrete attributes or qualities is, according to Petersen (2003), a myth. He comments that the historical and social construction of masculinity are intimately associated with the constructions of femininity, therefore 'it is difficult to speak of masculinity without implying a binary notion of gender' (Petersen, 2003: 58). With this in mind, masculinity is often perceived and considered the rejection and 'flight from femininity':

Masculine identity is born in the renunciation of the feminine, not in the direct affirmation of the masculine, which leaves masculine gender identity tenuous and fragile . . . This notion of anti-femininity lies at the heart of contemporary and historical conceptions of manhood, so that masculinity is defined more by what one is not rather than who one is (Kimmel, 1994: 126-127).

The recognition that to 'be a man' is socially constructed and not a natural way 'to be', means that masculinity and the masculine gender identity is vulnerable and fragile. This vulnerability is protected against by the tenets of heterosexuality. Banditer (1995) claims that: 'being a man is expressed more readily in the imperative than in the indicative. The order so often hear – 'Be a man' - implies that it does not go without saying that manliness may not be as natural as one would think' (Banditer, 1995: 1-2). The feminist movement and gay liberation exposed the dominant mode of masculinity as producing a power structure in sexual politics with White heterosexual males at the top of the order, and homosexual men at the bottom. Consequently, masculinity is manifested as a commodity which can be possessed, measured or lost (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994). According to Jackson (1999), the interrelationship between gender and the social ordering of sexuality is essential to preserve the structure based upon heterosexuality. Homophobia is an essential tool in the definition of masculinity, because it rejects those men who act as potential objects of emotional or sexual attachment.

Carrigan et al., (1985) state that homosexuals are punished by a social system that imposes and transmits an ideology of the 'natural' differences between men and women. Homosexuals are denied an identity or space because they challenge the very idea of what it means to be a [heterosexual] man and a [heterosexual] woman (marital union and procreation), while, at the same time, contradicting the complementarity of the sexes found within the family. Indeed, the gay liberation movement stressed that the institutionalisation of heterosexuality (the family) was attained by a considerable effort, and at substantial cost not only to women but also to homosexual people (Carrigan et al., 1985). Homosexual men, are further penalised for their failure to emulate the standards of heterosexual masculinity, because the hegemonic masculine ideal, emphasises authority and strength (Connell, 1987), while the homosexual man epitomises effeminacy, weakness, and maladjustment. This perspective reveals that hegemonic masculinity is a specific type of masculinity to which 'others' (young effeminate, homosexual men) are inferior. It is not men in general, but particular groups of men who are subjugated within patriarchal sexual relations (Carrigan, et al., 1985: 587).

To summarise, discussions of men's gender in the 1970s and early 1980s concentrated on the concept of the male sex-role and the related problem of how men and boys are socialised into this role (Connell, 1998). The certainty in the essential nature of men and women collapsed with the feminist critique of gender. Masculinity was not a naturally created set of personality traits stemming from the male anatomy but socially constructed. In the 1990s, there was another conceptual shift from masculinity to the plural masculinities in order to highlight the different experiences amongst men. Dualistic distinctions have come under severe academic scrutiny (subject/object, self/other, nature/culture, mind/body, private/public, sex/gender, and heterosexual/homosexual) which demonstrate how they exclude and limit understanding (Petersen, 2003). Yet, very little research has been undertaken (Alexander, 2000; O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000) to analyse the foundation upon which masculinity is based, maintained and 'performed' amongst Muslim males in Britain. Issues surrounding religion (Islam), sexuality (heterosexuality) and gender (masculinity) remain under-theorised. Indeed, the analysis of ('Western') masculinity is inadequate in a number of ways, but the principle criticism is that it fails to describe the lives and experience of non-white and non-Christian men. Moreover, it ignores the influence of religion and the impact it may have on the lives of some men. Indeed, research on masculinity in sociology has largely been confrontational. It does not appear to be open to new ideas which depart from a socially and culturally constructed conceptual understanding of masculinity. In the next section, I examine the arguments put

forward by the interpretation of traditional and modern Muslim scholars on the issue of masculinity and the male role in religion.

### 7.3 MUSLIM MASCULINITY

Masculinity from a religious perspective has yet to merit even a cursory glance in sociological literature since it remains outside the boundaries of current research on masculinity (Ouzgane, 2003). Religiosity has been neglected in favour of the social, economic and political factors which affect and influence men's understanding of their masculine identity. Indeed, we find that 'within the general neglect of 'black' (ethnic minority) masculinity there is a particular dearth of research concerned with British Muslim identities' (Archer, 2001: 80). A Muslim perspective, I feel, merits serious academic attention. To date, a voluminous amount of literature has accumulated under the heading of 'Woman in Islam' (Roald, 2001; al-Jibaly, 2000; Wadud, 1999; al-Khattab, 1997; Schleifer, 1996; Doi, 1989). Muslim men have been 'shown but not said, visible but not questioned . . . implicitly talked of, yet rarely talked of explicitly' (Hearn, 1998: 782). This section seeks to begin to correct this by introducing the construction of masculinity by Muslim men and women. The plethora of work on women's position in Islam illustrates the idea that gender is a term that refers only to females, evident in the dearth of literature on Muslim men, who in contrast are considered as non-gendered beings.

In 'Western' literature on masculinity (as it is with femininity) Islam has been ignored and until very recently (Ouzgane, 2003) has attracted very little interest. In my analysis, I include both Muslim traditionalist and modernist arguments about gender and how they interpret the role of gender in Islam. How do religious legislation, custom and tradition combine to define the Muslim male role and status? In Islam, 'every aspect of human life, every thought and every action is shaped and evaluated in the light of the basic attitude of faith' (Eaton, 1997: 1). Therefore, to continue to ignore how the Qur'an and *hadith* perceives the role of the man and in turn how Muslim men interpret that role would be detrimental to the study of masculinity in contemporary Britain. I examine how scholars view the male, his role and responsibility in the family and in society. A significant part of this section is devoted to the issue of hierarchical relationship between man and woman, in order to reveal and define the male's position within this hierarchy. I examine the male's role as the leader, provider and protector of the family (and woman). I discuss what the Qur'an teaches and prescribes and what the model of the

Prophet Muhammad demonstrates. I will examine how some Muslim scholars have interpreted the male's role by looking in particular to the *hadith*.

### 7.3.1 CREATION OF HUMANKIND

The relationship between man and woman is essentially important in the conceptualisation of masculinity for Muslims. The beginning of humankind in Islam started with the creation of Adam and Eve<sup>1</sup>, the first man and woman. The latter 'without whom the first creation would have been imperfect and incomplete' (Eaton, 1997: 181). In order to understand the man's masculine identity, we must look at him in relation to the woman. It is important to detail briefly the process of creation in the Qur'an. Wadud (1999) explains that the term *khalāqa* is used to denote the beginning or initiation of creation, the second step, involves the creation of everything, and of each and every human being *Sawwara*, means 'form', 'shape', 'design', or 'perfect': perfection because Allah indicates that humankind has been created 'in the best of moulds' (Qur'an, 95: 4). Characteristic of humankind is the existence of two discrete yet compatible genders. The final step in the creation of humankind is the designation of humans above all other creations. Dualism is then an essential characteristic of created things (Wadud, 1999). In relation to marriage, the term *zawj* is applied in the Qur'an to refer to 'mate' (husband or wife) or 'spouse', while the plural *azwaj* is employed to signify 'spouses'. A man is only a 'husband' in reference to a 'wife'. The 'existence of one in such a pair is contingent upon the other in our known world' (Wadud, 1999: 21).

### 7.3.2 A DIVISION OF 'PAIRS'

Duality at the divine level affects and shapes the dual composition of humans: spiritual and corporeal. Murata (1992) argues that all creation on earth comes to life through the union of the complementary opposites. Murata (1992), in her work, argues that Islamic cosmology understands sexual differentiation of men and women as a cosmic polarity consisting of a yin/yang interplay of opposites. The former relates to the receptive or yin side, and is associated with 'feminine' qualities such as beauty, love and compassion. The latter refers to the yang dimension such as being dominating, forceful and controlling. Both are inseparable from the other and are vital to existence (Murata, 1992: 56). Given that Islam classifies things and mental states in pairs and tends to see everything as shaped by this perspective, then 'how could the masculine and the feminine sides to life not be equally important?' (Murata, 1992: viii). Moreover, all things in the universe are paired with other things, the union

---

<sup>1</sup> Qur'an, 7: 27.

between men and women represents this idea. Both Maududi (1972) and Murata (1992) refer to the creation of humans as pairs to situate the man in one sphere and the woman in another. They proclaim that this does not create a gender bias based on the superiority of the men over women, it is merely in keeping with the construct of pairs which produces two discrete genders.

For traditional Muslim scholars (al-Jibaly, 2000; Doi, 1989; Maududi, 1972), masculinity in the Qur'an and *hadith* can be seen in three distinct ways. Firstly, in psychological terms, there is a clear perception that men are emotionally different from women. Secondly, in terms of social roles, playing specific roles according to the gender of the spouse is important. This transposes into a set of distinctive practices: the husband is the breadwinner, the wife is the homemaker. Lastly, in biological terms, because women can reproduce and men cannot, men are endowed with physical strength and the women with a greater sense of emotion and care. The concept of the 'division of 'pairs' provides the basis of gender roles. According to Maududi (1972), males are 'active' and females as 'passive', this produces a 'sex-relationship' which infers that 'one partner should be active' (male) and 'the other receptive and passive' (female), 'one ready to influence (male) and the other to be influenced' (female), 'one prepared to act (male), and the other willing to be acted upon' (female). Dichotomy and dualism are effective ideological devices (Boyd, 2002) and act to enforce traditional stereotypes of male and female behaviour. The presence of the active and the passive components are both equally essential in order to uphold the principles of the Factory (he uses this metaphor to describe life/world). Yet, he argues that the 'activity' of the active partner and not the 'passivity' of the passive partner should result in the former being glorified and the latter depreciated. The distinction of an active partner is related to his ability to effectively perform the active part of his obligation in the sex-relation. Equally, the qualities of a passive partner are a demonstration of feminine qualities to a degree that she may perform the passive aspect of the sex-relation. The Maker (i.e. Allah) of the Machine utilises the active and passive part in their correct position.

Wadud (1999) challenges the values that have been ascribed to the distinction between the sexes. Accordingly, 'men are more human, enjoying completely the choice of movement, employment and social, political and economic participation on the basis of human individuality, motivation, and opportunity' (Wadud, 1999: 8). Wadud (1999) proposes that the Qur'an neither promotes nor prescribes stereotype roles for men or female. Such a pattern

would relegate the Qur'an to a culturally specific text not a universal text. Both are included in the primary purpose of the Qur'an, which is to guide humankind towards acknowledging a belief in certain truths. However, Wadud (1999) argues that masculinity is not a set of divinely created qualities that are inscribed into the elemental nature of males, nor is it a concept the Qur'an considers or refers to. It is important to note at this point that Wadud (1999) does not consider the *hadith* in her main arguments. In fact, she only employs the Qur'an to discuss issues of equality because the Qur'an is the word of Allah and the *hadith* the word of man. She also challenges the predominant male perspective which has dominated in the exegesis of Islamic theology. Barlas (2002) for instance points out that the *hadith* has been instrumental in certain ways, such as elaborating on the number and content of daily prayers. It also allows Muslims to learn about the life and ways of the Prophet, in order for Muslims to try to emulate his example more intimately. Nevertheless, she recognises the 'anti-woman content of the *Ahadith*' because it was the *ahadith* that brought into Islam descriptions of women as 'morally and religiously defective, 'evil temptresses, the greatest *Fitna* [temptation] for men' (Barlas 2002: 45). Thus, the concept of masculinity for instance, has figured 'very strongly in interpretation of the Qur'an without explicit Qur'anic substantiation of their implications' (Wadud, 1999: 22). The Qur'an, therefore, does not employ sex to create hierarchies that differentiate between the sexes. Although it identifies and acknowledges sexual differences, it does not adopt a position of sexual differentiation. Furthermore, references to an 'Islamic tradition' by Muslim male scholars is inherently patriarchal in nature, indeed, the sources (Qur'an, *Sunnah*, *hadith*, *fiqh*) have been interpreted by Muslim men who have taken it upon themselves to shape the theological, ontological and sociological status of Muslim women (Hassan, 1996: 56). It is the *hadith* literature which has subverted the Qur'an's message of liberation and equality, Hassan (1996) goes further and states that 'when seen through a non-patriarchal lens, the Qur'an goes beyond egalitarianism (Hassan, 1996: 62).

### 7.3.3 MALE RESPONSIBILITY

'Doing masculinity' is embodied in the male's responsibility in the public and private sphere. Indeed, in the dual structure or pairing of humankind Allah has designed man's personality and character as a 'degree' above women<sup>2</sup>. So is the difference between the sexes based on a relationship of superiority and inferiority? Given that this 'degree' is discernible in the family, it is necessary to speak about the importance of the family. The role of the family in Islam is essential: it is the cornerstone and basic unit of society (Esposito et al., 2002; Al-Sadlaan,

---

<sup>2</sup> Qur'an, 2:228.



1996) and thus the basis of all civilization (Dahl, 1997). Within the family, the man/father is given the role/position of the *imam*. Family relations are therefore regulated by hierarchically defined prerogatives and obligations (Savaya & Cohen, 2003). For Badawi (1992), in order to fully understand the different roles in marriage, we must turn our attention to the physiological and psychological composition of man and woman. Although both have an equal claim on one another and have equal rights, there is one exception which is man's responsibility and leadership. This Badawi (1992) argues is 'a matter which is natural in any collective life and which is consistent with the nature of man' (Badawi, 1992: 138).

Wadud's (1999), work which has involved a re-reading and reinterpretation of the Qur'an, maintains that there are no explicit cultural roles or functions specified at the point of creation during which time Allah identifies certain qualities general to all humans and not particular to one gender. She points out that the Qur'anic description of the creation of humankind is significant as it indicates that humans share an exclusive point of origin. On the contrary, Islam informs us that humans were produced from a single *nafs* [self]: both men and women exhibit the same characteristics, and have the same ability for making ethical choices, reasoning, and distinctiveness. The Qur'an judges both men and woman according to the same standard of behaviour. In addition, it assigns men and women as each other's protectors and guardian, signifying that they possess the capacity of achieving moral independence and thus have the function of responsibility for the other (Barlas, 2002). In contrast to the traditional scholars discussed earlier, Barlas declares that the 'Qur'an challenges the constitutive myths of patriarchy and that it does not inherently or symbolically (biologically or culturally) privilege males, masculinity, fathers' (Barlas, 2002: 93). The single distinctive value is the fear of Allah (*taqwa*), distinction lies only between those who meet the expectations of God and those who do not; [i.e.] those who live up to the human role in existence and those who do not' (Barlas, 2002: 146).

#### 7.3.4 'EQUALITY'?

This brings us to an important point in the literature, which purports an 'equal, yet different' perspective in relation to men and women's roles. As Khuri (2001) points out: 'although men and women are equal in the act of creation their bodies are not the same' (Khuri, 2001: 40). There is 'equality' yet difference, the two terms are juxtaposed in a relationship of complementarity, because men and women are 'complementary souls' (Al-Sadlaan, 1996). This complementarity of roles in the family is recognised by legal scholars as Allah's and the

Prophet's arrangement of societal life (Dahl, 1997). This difference in 'equality' or what I term 'qualified equality' relates to the man's larger share of responsibility. Because he must carry the burden of fulfilling the basic needs of their wives and children, men are allocated the esteemed position of the head's of household (Kazi, 1995). For the man to be the head involves taking precedence, initiative and authority. The Qur'an grounds equality of the sexes in relation to human value and their duty to Allah. Nevertheless, this equality does not imply identical roles. Rather, the husband is positioned to be in charge of the woman who must be obedient to him (Shoomaan, 1996). Barlas (2002) argues that the man is not assigned or chosen to be the guardian over his wife and children nor the head of the household. Wadud (1999) also points out that the Qur'an does not suggest a particular role or distinct definition of a set of roles for men and women. Instead, in the Qur'an both men and women are held accountable according to the same standards of moral behaviour, are of the same nature, and equally entitled to peace, love and comfort. Despite this, there remains the propensity among Muslims to characterise husbands as guardians over their wives (Barlas, 2002). For example, in Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'an, he defines men as the protectors and maintainers of women, not their guardians. Yet, he alters social responsibility contained in his description into paternalism by employing the term 'strength' (Qur'an, 4: 34) to stipulate 'what it is that God has given the one more of than the other'. In effect, in his commentary of verse 2:228, the man's responsibility is 'to maintain woman' indicates that there is 'a certain difference in nature between sexes'. Consequently, 'Ali transforms an injunction about social duties into a claim about male biology and ontology' (Barlas, 2002: 185). Similarly, in Maududi's interpretation and commentary: 'men are the managers of the affairs of women because Allah has made one superior over the other' the husband is characterised as a ruler over his wife or as the head of the household. Barlas (2002) argues that this disregards the fact that the Qur'an delegates women and men as each other's *awliya*, or protectors of one another. This would not be possible if one (men) is superior to the other (women).

### 7.3.5 MASCULINE QUALITIES

We must pay particular attention to the specific qualities of the Muslim man as the head of the household, to examine how men 'do masculinity' in the home. Given that this position is exclusively held by males (since only men are the heads'), what does this tell us about male masculine qualities? Man in the Qur'an has two primary responsibilities: responsibility for his own self (Qur'an, 75: 14-15) and a set of responsibilities which follow from his position in the

family and in society. The husband's duty towards his wife includes giving her *mahr*<sup>3</sup> and providing financial maintenance. He must protect and provide for her in a way that is best for her. Protection is a broad term that includes physical, emotional, and other forms of security. He must guard her from sources of displeasure. He must treat her well and not be harsh or despotic (Al-Sadlaan, 1996). Moreover, the man's responsibility extends and continues even after he divorces her. She is to be maintained at the same standard he is: irrespective of whether there is an expectation of reconciliation, the separation must be respectable (Doi, 1984). Although reference is made to women as the 'weaker sex' (Badawi, 1992), none of the authors in turn claim that men are the 'stronger sex'. This is implied but not expressed because of the negative connotations associated with 'strong men', such as being overbearing, dominant, dictatorial and so forth. The man as the father also displays masculine qualities, such as provision, leadership and responsibility. He is obligated to lead his family to the best of his ability. However, male independency as the head does not entail the domination of those dependent upon him (financially, emotionally and so forth), because the man is dependant on the woman, as she is to him. This creates complementarity, indeed, the use of this discourse of complementary deflects any criticism of inequality or arguments about subordination. Status and respect is allocated to men and women only if they remain within their particular gender roles. This is similar to Parsons' (1955) idea about separating the functions (expressive and instrumental) of the man and woman which helps to maintain harmony in the organisation of society (Rogers, 2001). The Qur'an and *hadith* organises social and personal life according to responsibility by making every one responsible both for himself and others. Thus, each have their responsibilities arranged according to their position in society:

Narrated By Ibn Umar: I heard Allah's Apostle saying: "All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care. The Imam (i.e. ruler) is the guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them and a man is the guardian of his family and is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it. A servant is the guardian of his master's belongings and is responsible for them. I thought that he also said, "a man is the guardian of his father's property and is responsible for it. All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care"<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dowry given by a husband to his bride after marriage.

<sup>4</sup> Bukhari, Volume 2, Book 13, *Hadith* Number 018.

Although the above *hadith* falls into the category of male superiority, it still suggests 'the need to show decent behaviour towards women' (Roald, 2001: 149). The *hadith* differentiates along gender lines with clear and pronounced sets of obligations and duties that are specific to one gender. The *hadith* positions the man as the 'guardian of the family' indicating that a certain degree of compliance is due to him, but this obedience is only binding if he demonstrates protection, maintenance, and strength in the care of his family (Maqsood, 1995). Maqsood (1995), a White female British convert to Islam, shifts the direction slightly. Although she supports and accepts the idea that the husband is the head of the household as one of the basic principles of Muslim marriage, she adds that he must demonstrate himself as deserving of that position. Thus, the authority given to man in relation to the woman is legitimate and effective only to the extent that he attests and represents the authority, which primarily and properly belongs not to him but to Allah.

To create an image of man as a benevolent carer and protector, one of the primary attributes of the head is that they 'treat women kindly'. Kindness, love, comfort and intimacy are not the exclusive attributes of femininity. Indeed, the more caring, polite and kind a Muslim man is towards his wife, the more commendable he is as a leader (Maqsood, 1995). Leadership does not entail being dominating, rather it encompasses a sense of benevolent responsibility (cf. Piper, 1991). Doi (1984) comments further that the Qur'an lays great emphasis on the kind and good treatment towards the wife. Masculine leadership is a fusion of power with tenderness, vigour with affection, strength with sensitivity. This is a unique perspective distinct from the way masculinity is conceptualised in much of the 'Western' literature. This is supported in the Prophet's last sermon and also in *hadith* where the Prophet praises and recommends men to treat their wives kindly (Doi, 1984). The male role requires the adoption of typically 'feminine' characteristics in order to prevent the misuse of the power Allah has given men. Maqsood (1995) highlights particular attributes of the man as a husband. These include being a good provider: 'Islam is very keen on men earning, striving and supporting, and not depending on others' (Maqsood, 1995: 59). To be a man, thus, involves endeavour, independence, defensibility, support and above all the power and ability to earn. However, his earnings must be shared and distributed, because men who possess money, yet keep their wealth away from the family, are not amongst the Muslims (Maqsood, 1995). This responsibility is not relinquished or decreased if the wife's wealth is greater than her husband's, because the wife is not responsible for the maintenance of the family financially (Hewitt, 1997; Badawi, 1992).

### 7.3.6 RELIGION AND MUSLIM MALE PRACTICES

Religion is not a privatised system of individual morality, experience and belief, but forms the foundation of civilisation (Adeney, 1995). It promotes social networks and support and provides a coherent framework for believers. For Muslims, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet continue to be the incontestable basis of the *Shari'ah* (Peters, 2003). Thus, 'man's function in the scheme of things, his destiny, his duties, have been declared with unprecedented clarity; since all that needed saying has been said, there can never again be any need for a 'reminder' to mankind' (Eaton, 1997: 45). The Qur'an provides Muslims with a concrete basis with which they can live their life. While Prophet Muhammad provides humans with an ideal or perfect model of Muslim life, his behaviour articulates a 'pattern that all believers are to emulate. He is, as some Muslims say, the 'living Qur'an'—the witness whose behaviour and words reveal Allah's will. Thus, the practices of the Prophet became a material source of Islamic law alongside the Qur'an' (Esposito, 1998: 13). The Prophet's influence on Muslim life cannot be underestimated (Esposito, 1994), nor his life reduced to being a spiritual leader, because he 'lived a more complete human life, he was not only a businessman, husband, father, spiritual guide, military commander, judge, arbitrator, ruler but his life provides a 'universal paradigm of the fulfilled human life' (Corrigan et al., 1998: 199). Muslim men also 'do masculinity' in various religious practices. The differences between men and women are much more salient in practices (from praying, funeral attendance, to *Jihad*) and appearance. Not only do men and women play discrete roles, they must also be different in their appearance, dress and mannerisms. For example, the Prophet cursed both women who imitate men and the men who imitate women<sup>5</sup>, he also cursed women who acted and behaved like men<sup>6</sup>. Eaton (1997) explains that:

It is precisely because Islam goes so far in accepting the natural instincts, and sanctifying them that it is obliged to 'draw the line' so firmly and to punish with such severity departures from the norm and excursions beyond the limits established by the religious law. The requirements of social and psychological equilibrium, the need to protect women and the security of children are the motives that determine this law . . .' (Eaton, 1997: 50)

Men's dress is distinct from that of Muslim women, their *awra* is different from women although they have a particular code of dress it is markedly less evident than women's. The man's *awra* is considered to be that between the navel and knees (Mohamed, 2003; Lang,

---

<sup>5</sup> Bukhari. Book 27, *Hadith* Number 4086 & 4087.

<sup>6</sup> Abu Dawud. Book 27, *Hadith* Number 4088.

1994). During *Hajj*, this difference is more prominent, men put on two simple, white, seamless sheets, one tied and covering the body from the waist down to the knees, the other is wrapped over the left shoulder and rests at the waist. Women however, have no specific dress code though their entire body is covered usually (Peters, 2003). Although modesty is recommended for both sexes, the man's body is not sexualised in the same way as a woman's body is. Male clothing should not only be modest but also must not be made of silk (Corrigan et al., 1998). We find in the *hadith*, that while silk and gold are permissible for women they are prohibited to men: women 'are singled out for rulings that do not pertain to men, men are singled out for rulings that do not pertain to women' (Ibn al-Arabi cited in Murata, 1992: 180). In a *hadith* report the Prophet said: perfume used by men should have an odour but no colour, and the perfume used by women should have a colour but no odour<sup>7</sup>. The Muslim man must be distinguishable in manner of adornment from women. In one *hadith* the Prophet 'took silk and held it in his right hand, and took gold and held it in his left hand and said: both of these are prohibited to the males of my community<sup>8</sup>. Why is silk and gold prohibited for men but allowed for women? Silk and gold are associated with femininity and therefore, for men it is uncomplimentary because it has connotations of effeminacy, of ornamentation and decoration, and a concern with one's appearance. Silk and gold are powerfully loaded symbols of femininity, because 'Allah has given a physique to man which is distinct from a woman . . . it does not behove a man to vie with women in the use of jewellery' (Riaz, 1991: 73).

Siraj Wahaj (2002), an Afro-American Muslim convert who is a prominent speaker on Islam around the world, in an audio lecture titled 'Feminine Men and Masculine Women', explains that the clothing one wears has an effect on their mannerism, demeanour, on their way of thinking. The effect that a woman has by wearing certain clothing will be distinct from the effect men elicit. He explicates that the principal reason behind the Prophet's proscription of men wearing silk and gold is 'because something happens to the man when they put on gold, he acts differently . . . because a man wasn't made to wear gold in this life . . . he acts differently, he can't help it. So the silk does something it makes the man feminine, not masculine men'. Silk and gold antagonistically go against the very attributes of masculinity in Islam, it weakens the man. As Wahaj points out, men's masculinity and masculine strength withers away and is suppressed under a feminine exterior. Men should be masculine and display qualities such as strength, reliability, and independence. However, these scholars do

---

<sup>7</sup> Bukhari. Book 27, *Hadith* Number 4037.

<sup>8</sup> Bukhari. Book 27, *Hadith* Number 4046.

not highlight or make prominent the idea that a man must have some feminine traits in order to be masculine in Islam. Indeed, Wahaj proclaims that men must be more manly, his definition of man/manhood is the Prophet, who was 'firm, but gentle . . . compassionate, but a warrior for Allah'. Islam is the creed of *jihad* [struggle] and strength, it requires the safe guarding of manhood from those tendencies which lead to weakness, lassitude and degeneration' (Riaz, 1991: 73). Moreover, male strength is a marker of masculinity, it is masculine and positive when exercised for the Cause of Allah. It symbolises valour, gallantry and courage in order to differentiate men from other men, but also indicates the difference between women. Strength also acts as recognition of the status of males, of competition and honour. Honour and strength are essential for the Muslim male identity. Indeed, men who fight in the Cause of Allah are described as *Muhjahid* (Muslim fighter), a dignified and esteemed title that grants men both privilege and status not only in this world but also in the Hereafter<sup>9</sup>.

There are practices in Islam which are distinct for men and women, for instance, women are not prescribed to pray nor to fast during their menstruation they are also exempt from *Jihad*<sup>10</sup>. However, men have been instructed to pray in the mosque as part of a congregation<sup>11</sup>. In addition to this, an appointed leader referred to as the *Imam*<sup>12</sup> who leads the prayer. The word 'he' to refer to the *Imam* signifies that a woman can not be an *Imam* in mixed congregation. This is a male-only vocation. No woman is allowed to lead a male in prayer (Ibn Majah cited in Kamal, 1986). A woman may serve to lead prayers in an all female congregation. It is related from 'Aishah that she would make the *adhan*<sup>13</sup> and *iqamah*<sup>14</sup> and lead the women in prayer, standing in the middle of the row<sup>15</sup>. According to the *Maliki* school because it was not common to see women leading women in prayer it is adjudged that it was not appropriate for women to lead prayers with other women, let alone men. Ansari (2005) points out that because the *Hanafi* school strongly prohibits women leading other women in prayer, this therefore means that women are advised against creating their own congregations. In contrast, the *Shafi'i* school maintains that congregational prayer is recommended for women, but does not allow for female's to lead male followers. Even the

<sup>9</sup> Paradise has one-hundred grades which Allah has reserved for the *Mujahidin* who fight in His Cause (Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, *Hadith* Number 048.)

<sup>10</sup> Bukhari, Volume 2, Book 26, *Hadith* Number 595.

<sup>11</sup> Obligatory prayers as well as Friday prayers (Sarwar, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> The word 'Imam' as used in the Qur'an means a source of guidance (e.g. Qur'an 2:124).

<sup>13</sup> Islamic way for calling Muslims to prayer.

<sup>14</sup> The call which announces to the congregation that the obligatory prayer is about to commence. Similar to the *Adhan*, but in a shortened form.

<sup>15</sup> *Fiqh-us-Sunnah*, Volume 1: Purification and Prayer, Fiqh 1.104a.

structure of the mosque takes segregation into account men and women are separated with the males in front and the females at the back or on a balcony (Corrigan et al., 1998). Therefore 'such positions of structural privilege are set aside for Muslim men because, Islam is a patriarchal religious institution' (Read & Bartkowski, 2000: 398). Yet, recently Amina Muhsin-Wadud led Friday prayer congregation in New York (March 18, 2005), with over 100 men and women in a church after mosques refused to hold the service with Wadud leading prayers. Wadud stated that she felt that leading prayers was a way to challenge centuries-old tradition of segregating men and women during congregational prayer and preserving the role of the male as the *Imam*. Thus feminists like Wadud are challenging the all-male Muslim clergy (*Imams, Mullahs, or Ulāmas*) who act as interpretive authorities yet, promulgate a patriarchal scriptural interpretation to Muslims.

#### 7.4 CONCLUSION

The literature on masculinity has expanded the terrain of gender and sexuality bringing insights into the lives of men and their position in society and in the home. In the mid 1950s and early 1960s, theorists drew upon essentialist theory, which described masculinity as an inherent set of qualities within men. However, with the feminist and gay movement there was a radical overhaul of traditional ideas about sex and gender. Masculinity was characterised as problematic (Whitehead, 2001), research in the 1970s, ushered a new era of research. Both gay activism and the feminist movement highlighted the importance of socio-cultural factors in shaping men's masculinity and masculine identity. The social constructivist model concentrated on gender as a category shaped by socialisation, by cultural convention and not by nature. In recognition of the various experiences of different men (class, race and sexuality), the term masculinity became outdated and instead the plural masculinities was championed. Men are therefore, gendered beings they 'do masculinity'.

However, the term adopted in this thesis was 'masculinity' to reflect the idea that masculinity and the masculine Muslim male are only seen in relation to the role and position of the female because the man's identity is intimately tied with that of women. Thus, we found that in contrast to sociological view of gender, we find that Muslim scholars use a psychological (women are emotionally weaker and men stronger) and biological perspective (women are weaker and man physically stronger) in examining masculinity. Traditional, Muslim scholars approached and construct the concept of masculinity by referring to the Qur'an and *hadith*. They believe both sources reveal the nature of masculinity and femininity through a description



of the diverse responsibilities of men and women. As a result, they base differing responsibilities in creation, not social or cultural convention. For these scholars the masculine qualities: protector, provider, leader and carer are interpreted as ideal for men and only men. It also rewards him through his kindness, care and provision of the family. Interestingly, masculinity is qualified and conflated with distinctive feminine qualities. Societal and cultural norms merely nurture a man's masculine gender identity. Expressed in the work of traditional scholars is the fact that the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* do not leave Muslims in ignorance about their roles in life. Rather there is a detailed account of how one must live in a complementary relationship with their spouse (expounded in the *hadith*). Allah instills a powerful gendered dimension to one's character; indeed, gender conditions every aspect of one's life.

However, Muslim female feminists like Barlas (2002) Wadud (1999) and Hassan (1987) express a desire to move beyond a traditional gender and sexual hierarchy in the family. They argue that the Qur'an is used as a tool for men to dominate and control women by labelling them as inferior and weak. There is a tendency to stress equality on the one hand, yet, traditionalists highlight the 'unique' differences between the sexes: while women are devalued, men are valued and respected. Feminist scholars dismiss a hierarchical relationship based on sex because in the Qur'an man and woman are 'related to each other ontologically, not merely sociologically' (Hassan, 1999, cited in Barlas, 2002: 135). According to this understanding, the Qur'an promotes an image of the man and woman as equal yet contingent characters. In arriving at this conclusion, Barlas (2002) and Wadud (1999) place great weight upon the exegetical possibilities of the account of human beings in the Qur'an, not the constrictive accounts given in *ahadith*. Thus, there was evidence, of a shift in exegetical analysis and enquiry of the Qur'an. A move away from what Stowasser (1987) pertinently refers to as the 'scripturalist activists' or activism, that is, those who 'translate the sacred texts directly into contemporary thought and action' (Stowasser, 1987: 275). Moving towards questioning and challenging the foundations of knowledge that are accepted as truth in religion, particularly in relation to gender. Indeed, both Barlas and Wadud argued that traditional interpretations are contrary to the Islamic principle of equality. In other words, how can Muslims create gender hierarchies when Allah speaks of man and woman as equals. Moreover, they both reject the *hadith* claiming that it is the principle source which provides traditionalist scholars with the justification for male dominance and female oppression. Work on masculinity in the 'West' is disconnected from arguments of biology and nature. Indeed, the views expressed by my participants cannot adequately be described by the sociological literature as focuses on the

negative aspects of men's masculinity and masculine identity in relation to women. Views expressed by my sample of Muslim men and women were not wholly aligned with current trends or ideas in sociology in the 'West', which proposes a move away from traditional gender roles. No longer are men expected to be the breadwinner and the women confined to the role of mother/wife. It is therefore, difficult to apply the work of contemporary sociologists and their theories on gender to a group of people who believe in the separation of the sexes; a distinction between instrumental and expressive roles (Parsons & Bales, 1955): 'doing masculinity' as distinct from 'being feminine'. The crux of the issue is the inclusion of religion or exclusion in 'Western' literature. For my sample religion was implicit in the cultural ideals and values some men and women. In the next chapter, I examine the views of male participants on masculinity, on the male role and the influence of Islam on their understanding and interpretation of masculinity.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### MALE VIEWS ON MASCULINITY

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Muslim men have largely been missing from studies of gender and more specifically from the literature on masculinity, with the exception of a few studies (cf. Ouzgane, 2003; Archer, 2001). Instead, Muslim men have been portrayed as the oppressor, responsible for female subordination, dominance and violence. In 'Western' literature, 'men' emerge as a potent, homogeneous category that is invariably treated as problematic. Mirandé (1997) makes a very important point when he comments that 'there appears to be a prevailing, though unstated, assumption in social science that findings and generalizations obtained with White samples and reflecting dominant theories, perspectives, and ideologies are generalizable to the population as a whole' (Mirandé, 1997: 28). Therefore, in this chapter, I seek to correct this situation. I include accounts given by both male and female participants. I am concerned with how male participants perform masculinity in their everyday life. That is, how do they 'do masculinity'? It is essential to look at the various meanings attributed to the term 'masculinity' firstly by male participants (and in the following section female participants), and the assumptions as well as the implications that ensue from these meanings. This chapter, therefore, provides an analysis of masculinity, qualities associated with the term, its construction, and the role it plays in shaping the experiences male participants.

#### 8.2 THE MEANING OF MASCULINITY

In response to the question, 'what does the term masculinity mean to you?' There was a considerable overlap in the views expressed by male and female participants. For some, masculinity was just a term used to refer to a particular feature without positive or negative attributes: 'masculinity just means you've got the organs of a man that's it' (Tahir, 40). For other male participants, the term was imbued with positive meaning and value and involved a number of desirable personal traits:

I think men have to be assertive, that's one of the things that makes him a man, for example if he's talking and he's assertive, be strong don't be cowardly. (Ibrahim, 26)

I think the man should be supportive, should be responsible, knowledge to lead his family, provide emotional support and provide food. (Saeed, 34)

Both men were practising Muslims, Ibrahim had grown up in a family where gender roles were quite rigid, his mother was a housewife and father was the sole breadwinner. Moreover, Ibrahim stated that 'there was no cross over, in terms of what each parent did, my father didn't ask my mother about anything, he was the decision maker'. While Saeed, a Moroccan, married father of one, commented that the qualities he described as being masculine were the 'norm' in Morocco. For these men, masculinity involved men playing an instrumental role (Parsons, 1955), to protect, to provide, to be responsible and assertive. However, the terms used indicates expectation: 'men have to be assertive'; 'should be responsible'. By doing so, the participants demonstrate that men are *expected* to have these qualities because they are male, not because of some innate male instinct or disposition. Male participants expressed deeper attitudes towards the role of the man and woman in the family with a strong belief in the discourse of complementarity:

It's bi-polar, there are certain qualities that men have and there are certain qualities that woman have, and both of these have to go together. I think naturally men are a lot more aggressive than women, women expect to be wanted they expect to get a lot love. Men are not like that, men are more hard and rough. Men are more physical their skin is more rough, women are more gentle and their skin is more soft, and you kind of get that type of relationship in men and women that's how they are. (Haroon, 36)

Haroon reiterates the view of Badawi (1992) who stated that it is the physical and psychological difference between man and woman upon which man's responsibility and leadership is based. Men are aggressive, rough, and thus, able to deal with hardship. Women are soft and gentle, and are therefore in need of the care and love of a man. The discourse is one of complementarity, that is, the idea that men and women are naturally suited to occupy the positions and roles that are prescribed for them by their sex. Pervaiz (65), a Pakistani, divorced father of three, believed that to be masculine involved simply following ones 'nature:

Roles are ordained by nature. . . the man's responsibility is to care for the safety of the family and woman's responsibility is to rear the children.

Thus, a man's biology legitimises his presence in the public sphere and that of women in the private sphere. According to Kynaston (1996), 'naturalistic arguments, with their strong undercurrents of biological determinism, are habitually invoked in order to justify and uphold the subordinate position of women relative to men, both within the home and outside of it' (Kynaston, 1996: 225). Indeed, the provider role (providing food, clothes, a home and so on),

was frequently used to demonstrate a man's masculine identity. This corresponds with Brannon's (1976) idea of 'the big wheel', which as a core concept of masculinity is used to refer to the achievement of success, status and being a breadwinner. Gender for Ibrahim, a middle class professional, was an absolute entity of human behaviour, with the provider role being described as 'natural', an act that legitimises gender roles by positioning men as outside human agency:

[The natural side of men] is to go and work, to protect their families. They [men] are not going outside of their natural environment, women are. (Ibrahim, 26)

When you're [female] born your dad looks after you, then you've got your brothers and once you get married your husband looks after you (Mansoor, 27).

The man's role was simply 'to take care of the whole family, responsibility' (Ahmed, Male 25). Such an understanding creates a universal model of masculinity based on the ideology of breadwinning, which shapes men's gender relations and defines their sense of self, manhood and gender. Through marriage, men enter 'a set of interpersonal and institutional practices that connect him to a public world and give him a masculine position and stance within it' (Connell, 1992: 741). Men's position as the breadwinner is described as natural, and the public sphere as their natural 'habitat' (natural environment). Women disrupt the 'natural' association between man and work by encroaching on male territory. They expressed what Piper (1991) calls 'mature masculinity', which involves a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships'. For Piper (1991), a conservative Christian scholar, to be masculine, a man must feel as well as sense that he is masculine, and the affirmation of this is expressed in the responsibility of woman. There was a distinct expression of paternalism, the view or attitude that woman should be controlled and protected in a fatherly way for her own benefit. By combining masculine traits with paternalistic ideas, they conceive of their role as a justification for their strength. This was a marker of masculinity:

To be strong, brave in fights. (Rashid, 35)

Strong physically and mentally. (Yaseen, 17)

Have physical strength and to be able to protect. (Rafiq, 48)

As we can see, the age of the above participants varied, all were practising Muslims and, with the exception of Rashid, Yaseen and Rafiq, were from middle class families. Ideas about strength and protection corresponds with Brannon's (1976) idea of 'the sturdy oak', that is, part of the core elements of masculinity are strength, confidence and independence. However, Pervaiz, a Pakistani, and Usman an Iraqi, both practising Muslims, stressed that physical strength itself is not an adequate measure of ones masculinity:

The strength has two facets, one is mental strength or spiritual strength the other is physical strength. So as far as physical strength is concerned the man is more stronger, so the man's job is to protect and to fight as well. This power, this authority, this increase in strength has got responsibility as well, because when you have authority, when you have responsibility you cannot abuse it, you are responsible for using it properly. (Pervaiz, 65)  
It's like a knife if you put the knife in the Doctor's hand it will be used properly for the sake of doing something to the patient, but if you give that knife to a madman then it will have a different affect. (Usman, 39)

Just as the Doctor is concerned with curing the patient through his knowledge and care, the husband also uses his strength to care for and protect others. Yet, there is also a recognition of the potential to misuse his power and strength:

The man should be strong, but also have mercy; he should fulfil the needs of the family, and be hard worker. They are positive, but you shouldn't use your strength to abuse others. It's positive when you are brave defending Islam or your country. (Rashid, 35)

These men do not see power as wholly negative. In the context of the care of others, it is positive and beneficial. There is a need and necessity for them to demonstrate strength, valour, and heroism for not only their family and their position in the public realm, but also patriotically and for their religion. The view of strength here is an essential element of masculinity but with attached aspects of justice and mercy, which acts to legitimate male superiority. Wetherell (1993) suggests the masculine identity is defined in relation to the 'protection of femininity', especially through the control and care of women (Wetherell, 1993, cited in Archer, 2001: 83). This was evident in participants' views because one of the essential qualities of being a man/masculine (used interchangeably by male participants) was to provide for and to protect the wife and the family:

Being able to provide for you family and protect them for me that is essential, looking after your children and your wife. That is what makes a man. (Azhar, 23)

The ideas expressed by Azhar, a single, non-practicing Muslim, stems from his experiences during childhood. He related that his father, a Pakistani migrant was an example of the role a man as a husband and father should play: provision and care. In this way, being the provider is a way to demonstrate 'doing masculinity'. The masculine/feminine duality supports Maududi's (1972) argument that this 'sex relation' is reflected in a binary dualism: 'active and passive', for men this involves being the protector:

If a thief came to my house I would be the first one to go and fight them I wouldn't go and ask my wife to, so it's a physical thing. (Rafiq, 48)

By projecting on to men a capacity to protect, they in turn deny this ability to women. Women need protection and care. Yet, some men defined masculinity as culturally created and identifiable traits. Masculinity referred to a set of stereotypes and was dismissed as a caricature and a tool for males to dominate women:

Authority, shouting loud, dictatorship almost. (Bilal, 28)

Big fat slob lying on his couch drinking his beer or telling his wife to go get him a glass of water, fetch! Masculinity and chauvinism tend to go hand in hand. (Abid, 38)

Clearly there's a huge negative element to it, so men have basically said this is masculinity, we've got it all you don't have any of it, it's ours and we're big because of it, and because we're physically stronger we can dominate you, that's an abuse of masculinity. It is perhaps distant, divisive when its negative, exclusive. (Farooq, 40).

Like courage and bravery and this sort of nonsense . . . people tend to associate particular forms of behaviour with one sex not with the other. (Tariq, 40)

It is noteworthy, that excluding Bilal, the other male participants were non-practising Muslims. Bilal, a sales assistant, did not believe that masculinity entailed a set of traits directly associated with the man's capacity to earn and work outside of the home. In his own family, Bilal often did much of the cooking and shared in domestic chores. Therefore, the role that he played within his home conflicted with traditional ideas about masculinity. Masculinity involved

exercising control over women. All these men (with the exception of Bilal) were born and bred in Britain. Abid, who lived on his own, also related that his personal experience showed that women are far from 'dependant meek creatures'. His sisters worked and were independent at a time 'when it was not deemed appropriate for Pakistani women to work outside the home'. These men were also highly educated: Abid had a Doctorate, Tariq was a System Administrator (both worked in a University) and Farooq was a medic. All three were middle class men, and by their own admission considered themselves as liberal 'Westerners'.

### 8.3 FATHERHOOD

While discussions of masculinity have been central to a number of disciplines for more than twenty years, very few have contributed to the study of fatherhood. For men in my research, the fathers' involvement in the family was in relation to the provision and protection of the family. His responsibility is central to the family but distinct from the female:

To provide to the best of my capacity, give the best at the same time give the child the best of manners, give him the best of education. (Hanif, 55)

Participant: From a natural disposition if you look at a man is stronger physically, mentally in some ways . . . emotionally, you know the feminine touch that's the natural side of women.

Interviewer: What's the natural side of men?

Participant: I think being hands-on, like trying to . . . I don't know how to explain it just being hands-on, making sure everything is done, being the breadwinner. I think decision making is important, lets not beat around the bush, I'm not going to say that men don't they do it's fact. (Waqas, 24)

Waqas, a police officer and a practising Muslim, believes and supports the view that men 'are more rational or reasonable than women, who for their part are ruled over by their hearts or their emotions' (Edley & Wetherell, 1996: 107). Masculinity entails the repudiation of femininity (Kimmel, 1987). This separation is accomplished by emphasising different caring styles as a means of distinguishing men's contribution from that of women's. This contrasts with the views articulated by some traditional Muslim scholars like Maududi (1972), al-Jibaly (2000), Maqsood (1995) and Doi (1989), who argued that in order for men to be considered masculine they must adopt or display feminine characteristics, such as kindness, care and compassion.



#### 8.4 MASCULINE IDENTITY

A large number of male participants viewed masculinity in a positive light. They considered themselves to have masculine qualities or saw it as an ideal they hoped to attain. In response to the question 'do you consider yourself to be masculine?

At the moment, no, not really, because the terms I used to define masculinity don't apply to me. I only provide to my mum, actually I owe her a debt because when I was a child she looked after me. In Islam there is that debt that you have to repay. I'm repaying that debt, other than that I'm not making any decisions. I'm not protecting the house; I'm free of those responsibilities. (Ibrahim, 26)

Me? Yeah I'm Brad Pitt No. 2 [laughs]. I think so; I just do wild things to keep in touch with my masculine side, just like sports. I think I'm playing my natural role I don't think I'm doing anything that I shouldn't be. (Waqas, 24)

Masculinity is not intrinsically rooted to a set of attributes: it is not a natural state of being. Rather for Ibrahim, it was conferred to men when they become responsible for others (especially women: mother, sister and wife). The word 'responsibility' is chosen to imply that a man is uniquely called to account for his leadership, provision and protection in relation to women. The masculine identity is realised and achieved when a man develops from adolescence through to adulthood with a responsibility for others. Participants were also asked to describe a male behaviour, which they believed to display the opposite of masculinity. Haroon, a practising Muslim, believed that men were:

Becoming very passive, they're not leading anymore. It's not a thing of superiority or authority but I think men should be doing a lot more and more physically in society than woman are expected to do. I think men have to take that role, nowadays, the way society works both are taking that role. (Haroon, 36)

The power, authority, and status associated with the masculine role is being lost, because men are becoming feminine, 'passive'. This belief equates masculinity with hard work, achievement and competitiveness. It is men, through their 'masculine advantage' (physical strength and competence) who should be 'doing a lot more'. Yet, Haroon, a househusband, according to his own understanding has become more 'passive' because of the role he occupies within his family. Masculinity for some men was also essential in defining and distinguishes men from 'others':

Masculinity has become important in order to differentiate not only between woman but also between men and homosexuals because most of them are feminine natured. Although within their relationship I'm sure there will be someone whose more overpowering than the other one. So in that sense, masculinity for some people has become quite important not only do they feel that the role of the man is threatened from the woman but also from homosexuals as well. (Yasir, 37)

Yasir, a practising Muslim, uses masculinity to stratify human's firstly by virtue of their sex (female), and secondly according to their sexual practice (homosexuals). Yasir demonstrates in his response a hegemonic masculinity, which subordinates homosexual males because they are the antithesis of masculinity. Homosexual men pose a real threat to the identity of heterosexual males, because they undermine the very institution upon which heterosexual men derive their privilege and power.

#### 8.5 DOING MASCULINITY: THE BEARD

Male Participants also highlighted external as well as internal differences between men and women in order to 'do masculinity'. The beard was associated with masculinity, wisdom and piety. It was a male prerogative (Bouhdiba, 1998), which enhanced the male's masculine identity. It was conceptualised religiously because the Prophet emphasised and affirmed having a beard: 'it's the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, and it's a masculine thing as well' (Waqas, 24). The Prophet succinctly stated that Muslim men should 'cut the moustaches short and leave the beard (as it is)<sup>1</sup>'. The sort of masculinity it 'symbolises in Islam is a mark of authority and piety' (Delaney, 1995: 65). Bouhdiba (1998) goes further by stating that because the beard is a form of masculinity it 'is therefore a canonical duty to wear a beard' (Bouhdiba, 1998: 34). In addition, men who had a beard used it to distinguish between age groups and men and women:

The beard is a masculine thing, I think people at that time wore beards, even in the 'Western' world to be a man you had a beard that shows that you are different, you're different from a child, you're showing maturity and development in a person. (Haroon, Male 36)

The beard signifies an end to hairlessness and marks a mature masculine appearance. Indeed, the growth of the beard is regarded as a badge of maturity (Moller, 1987). From the

---

<sup>1</sup> Bukhari, Book 72 (Dress) *Hadith* Number 781 & 781

33 male participants, 13 had a beard. It was used by Yasir to signify and symbolise the difference between women and men:

The way I speak, the way I dress, the way, I do certain things I should be clearly distinguishable from a woman. That's why we should grow a beard, the Prophet (PBUH) said grow the beard to differentiate yourself not only from the unbelievers but to differentiate between men and women. It's natural. It's mentioned that there are certain aspects on our body's that should grow and there are others that are unclean that we should leave and that's what the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned to us so we follow it on that basis. (Yasir, 37)

Men do masculinity in a variety of ways, for Yasir, this involves his entire way of 'being'. His comportment, clothes and actions distinguish him from women, the beard symbolises that difference. The beard is held to be a biological imperative for men, and thus it undeniably impacts on the male gender, it is 'a masculine thing'. To be shaven is to situate oneself in the feminine realm; it involves a preoccupation with care and beauty. The beard is a major distinction between men and women, shaving it removes this distinction, and is thus a means of imitating women. As Riaz (1991), a Pakistani Muslim scholar, remarks: 'shaving the beard is an unnatural act that amounts to the identification with women . . . the beard . . . is a complement of masculinity; and is a distinctive feature of the male' (Riaz, 1991: 86). Participants were prompted to further elaborate on their own understanding and construction of masculinity. In the following responses, masculinity for some participants was understood in contrast to what it is not (i.e. feminine). Some men associated with femininity because their understanding of masculinity involved 'no sissy stuff' (Brannon, 1976):

Essential qualities of being a man? Don't be like a woman. For women I would say don't be like a man. Men shouldn't go to the depth of being like a woman, because women are meant to be of a certain nature. (Yasir, Male 37)

Being strong, not showing weakness, not acting like a women, my attributes are of a man, I don't act like a women. (Azhar, 23)

The passive attribute of being 'weak' conforms more closely to enactments of femininity and goes against conventional masculine behaviour. Azhar, a non-practising Muslim, measures masculinity against femininity not only to highlight the differences between the two but also to underscore the superiority of the former over the latter.

## 8.6 ISLAM

For some of the male participants, scriptural edicts (Qur'an) and the Prophet's *Sunnah* provided them with a clear understanding of their position in the home and in society: 'without a doubt, Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that men and woman are made different full stop' (Yasir, 37). Here sex is used to determine the roles and behaviours of men and women. Gender roles are believed to be 'natural' and involved respecting and understanding each spouse's role:

It's impossible that men can be equal to women, because we're different naturally. It's like your part of an engine, you fit in perfectly, and you run perfectly. They have their own role in life . . . It [Islam] gives you guidelines on the etiquette of respecting a female of respecting the man from his masculinity point of view. Islam gives you the boundaries, the etiquettes and *adhab* [etiquettes/manners] of understanding a woman's role and a man's role. But they slot them in together; they make their life work (Waqas, 24).

Waqas brings to attention the difference between 'equality' and 'equity'. On this issue, Badawi (1995) stresses the importance of the use of the term 'equity' rather 'equality'. He states that equality is often misinterpreted to refer to an unconditional equality, which encompasses every detailed item of comparison, rather than overall equality. Instead, in Islam, although all human beings are held to be equal they are not necessarily the same. There are many differences in ability, potential, ambition and wealth (Abd al 'Ati, 1998). Other participants derived from the Prophet and his companions a model of masculine behaviour, because they were held as models to be emulated (Khuri, 2001). As Abbas (52), a practising Muslim points out 'he [Prophet] has characters chosen by Allah, in fact he was behaved by Allah. Every one of us is behaved by our mother and father, he had no mother or father, He [Allah] told him to do that, don't do that'. Nevertheless, men and men's lives do not fall into neat categories rather they are represented by a contradictory collage of experiences that are socially and economically negotiated. In the following extract, Haroon, a qualified teacher, describes on the one hand the ideal he believes Islam espouses, and on the other hand his own personal experience:

The role of man in Islam is really to take care of the family. I think the husband's responsibility is to be the bread earner of the family. If the woman wants to be the bread earner it's not her responsibility it's the husband's responsibility, there's a difference here. A woman, if she wants to work she can work, if she doesn't want to work she doesn't have to, the man must work because he has to bring in the wealth. My situation is specific to myself and is

different. At the moment it's not a problem, it's not my fault that my wife gets work a lot easier and she earns two or three times as much as I would do, plus she likes to work. I know it's only a short-time thing. If my wife's not happy then I would have to go and force myself to go and work. The responsibility is on the man, but I know she enjoys her work. (Haroon, 36)

In the above extract, Haroon talks about the man's responsibility to look after and provide for his family. Although his current situation directly conflicts with this ideal, he claims that 'it's not a problem'. He justifies his wife's position as the sole breadwinner because 'she enjoys her work', 'she likes to work'. Ironically, Haroon voiced concerns earlier about 'men becoming very passive'. His response to this was: 'it's not necessarily me taking on the feminine, it's just that's what's happened, I'm still a masculine person. The only thing is that I'm not working, but I still do what I want to do, I still read, I still write, I still play football, it's not that I'm not working'. To be masculine concerns an active performance, he demonstrates that gender is an 'achieved property of situated conduct' (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In such a situation, because the 'traditional modes of masculinity become harder to sustain, so, in the absence of other, fuller sources of identity, it is clung to more desperately' (Frosh, 1995: 222). Although he is no longer financially 'active', he is in touch with his masculine side: he 'reads and writes', thus he is active in his vocation. He also plays football. Unlike a traditional housewife, who cooks and cleans, he has not become feminised through his experience within the 'feminine domestic realm'. Despite this, he feels the need to declare and affirm that: 'I'm still a masculine person'. On the one hand, he believes in traditional gender roles (men being the breadwinner), but on the other hand, he occupies a secondary position within the family and by his own account not a masculine role/position. Regardless of Haroon's actual status within the family, he is able to construct himself as masculine by discursively reworking his individual identity. He tries to negotiate a position that will not lead to potential criticism of him as a man, husband and his masculine identity. This is a way for Haroon to distance himself from subordinate masculinity (feminine/effeminate realm) by aligning himself with hegemonic masculinity.

To summarise, most of the men in my research believed in the idea of an essential difference between men and women which is demonstrated in their belief in gender roles. Indeed, these roles, it was claimed, were nurtured socially and culturally but the basis remains biological. Although not all male participants shared the meanings and values attributed to masculinity, they did share a framework. Many male participants depicted masculinity as a set of characteristics and attributes believed to be typical of men. The men interviewed were

engaged in accomplishing a masculine position. They constructed themselves as masculine through their role in the family and outside of it. Arguments put forward by some male participants produced a discourse that encouraged traditional roles and allowed a unitary model of masculinity. Other men believed that they were behaving in accordance with their nature, which accentuated an essentialist understanding while simultaneously weakening man's agency. The interview data indicates that provision and protection are considered principal markers of masculinity. The notion of masculinity and what are identified as masculine attributes were employed to celebrate and enhance normative maleness (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994). For some men, religion reinforced notions of gender difference in marriage, parenting, and this difference was concretised in marriage. Expectations of women and men's role were understood in deeply gendered ways and the behaviours appropriate to each gender were widely accepted. Men held strongly held views as to what constituted appropriate masculine role. Indeed, masculinity gives meaning to their male behaviour. Men's experiences within the public and private sphere maps out the ways in which masculinity is understood, constructed and justified. It is clear that masculinity only exists in relation to femininity (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002). In the next section, I examine female participants' view of masculinity.

## 8.7 FEMALE VIEWS ON MASCULINITY

In this section, I examine whether women approach and understand masculinity in distinct or similar ways to male participants. I examine whether the gendered interaction between men and women continues to reaffirm gender hierarchies, roles, and stereotypes. How do women understand the term? Do they differ from men in their understanding, if so, in what way? Do women preserve gender differences in their construction of masculinity? Do women affirm, contest, and/or disrupt these historically constituted meanings of masculinity?

### 8.7.1 THE MEANING OF MASCULINITY

For many female participants, their understanding of masculinity was based on the idea of the physical differences between men and women: 'men and women are equal in every aspect apart from physically' (Nafisa, 37). This produced a gender paradigm, which situated men and women in opposition to each other despite their apparent 'equality' in all aspects of life. Similar to some male participants, the connection between biology and gender was quite strong. The physical differences between the sexes were transposed into a hierarchical system where men and women were believed to possess certain characteristics:

I think these roles that men and women have are there because men are a lot stronger, so there are things which men can do that women can't do, and women can cope with things that men can't cope with. (Naima, 38)

When asked about masculinity, some female participants began by associating particular qualities:

Kindness. Because they are capable of giving and they have to be kind. (Zainab, Female 20)

Being a man, having the qualities that you can look after your wife and your children, be able to give your money and be happy that your giving your money and their [wife & children] spending it, being able to work. (Basma, 15)

I would say someone you can rely on, mature, tender, loving. (Rabia, 25)

All of the above female participants were young, practising Muslims: Zainab, a White Muslim convert, Basma a British born Iraqi, and Rabia a Moroccan university student. They demonstrate the importance of men being responsible financially. Unlike their male counterparts, they project an image of the masculine male as also possessing traditional feminine qualities. For instance, loving, giving, tenderness and kindness. Feminine descriptions of masculinity provide empowerment to men. For Basma, being a man and being masculine was the same thing. Like Zainab, she associated kindness with masculinity, embedded in this idea is an inscription of self-sacrifice, selflessness and responsibility on the part of the male, because 'real' men are those who give more than they take: they love others. Real men are generous' (Gilmore, 1993: 229). Interestingly, and distinctively for women, masculinity encompasses feminine qualities such as care and kindness rather than domination and subordination. In contrast, male participants in the previous section made very little reference to the idea that in order to be masculine they must demonstrate feminine qualities. Masculine virtues of strength, initiative and responsibility are connected to the protection of others especially women, the family affords men the opportunity to demonstrate their masculine strength and power.

#### 8.7.2 MALE RESPONSIBILITY

There was a close association in the responses of some participants between the biological characteristics of masculinity and the set of actions that were considered appropriate to masculinity. Leadership was typically identified as a masculine quality, and included masculine

communication styles such as assertiveness, independence and confidence. Men were also thought to be decisive, objective, and reasonable:

The ability to be objective about things to make hard decisions. (Aisha, 29)

Someone who is very strong and very level headed, able to make decisions.  
(Maryam, 22)

Both women were housewives with children, therefore, it is not surprising that both women believed that the man should be the one who has more power in exercising decisions. The masculine identity is forged through work and grounds men within public sphere. As Stimpson (1987) points out that to be masculine, involves having 'a particular 'psychological identity', 'social role', 'cultural script' and 'place in the labor force' (Stimpson, 1987: xii-xiii). Kauser believes:

Participant: Being a little bit aggressive, so he can hold his place, he stands by his family and wife, protector, provider. Provider tends to be a masculine quality, a woman can be the provider when the necessity arises not that she is incapable of doing it. Aggressiveness is a quality of a man, I personally feel, it is positive, it makes it easier for him to in a world of competition it'll stand him in good stead.

Interviewer: But for a man . . .

Participant: It is a necessity but for a woman it is an option. (Kauser, 49)

Aggressiveness was more suited in the world of [men's] work. Competitiveness was used to harness and extract an ideal masculinity that ties in with men's exclusive obligation to provide. In this perspective, men must be active and resolute in their public arena, because they are responsible for the social status of the family. Kauser valorises the male role of breadwinner and considered it a male prerogative. Originally from India, Kauser stated that 'when I was growing up in India, this was what we saw from our parents, aunts, uncles and neighbours, the father worked and the mother stayed at home'. Thus, in the minds of some women, the breadwinner continues to be a marker of masculinity, particularly because 'breadwinning is not merely a personal characteristic but a practice that emerges from gender relations' (Zuo, 2004: 814). Aggressiveness however, was a quality deemed inappropriate for women because they occupy the feminine realm which requires sensitivity, care and love. Aisha, Maryam and Kauser, all of whom had never participated in the paid labour market, perpetuate and support the belief that women are fundamentally incapable of 'men's work' and that 'men's work' should strictly remain in the masculine realm. Just as men hold expectations of women as



mother/wife, the expectations women hold of men involved fulfilling their responsibility in the family. Therefore, by 'assigning the breadwinning responsibility to men but not to women defines what is the appropriate behavior for each gender and holds individuals morally accountable for that behavior' (Zuo, 2004: 815). Indeed, women would not facilitate or accept a shift in men's position within the family because it would be detrimental to his masculinity and masculine position:

I think men should be strong. Strong in the emotional sense, I don't think it's good for men to be weak, not physically but in terms of being either indecisive or not knowing their own mind. To be someone that you can rely on, someone who can support you, the woman doesn't feel that she has to carry the whole burden, all the stress by herself she's got someone to turn to for help and support. I think that's what I feel the differences are. (Khadija, 27)

Authoritative, yeah, I think they should be. I don't think they should let a woman walk all over them, because that's when things go upside down isn't it, then you forget who is in charge. It's like in a school, if pupils were to tell the teacher what to do, it wouldn't be very functional would it? (Maryam, 22)

Khadija, a practising Muslim and a medical Doctor had been married for eight years, and Maryam, a married mother of two girls, were both respectful of their husband's position in the family and contemptuous of the idea of 'women walking all over men' because it challenged the male's dominant position. Moreover, they both felt that women need someone (man) to 'turn to for help 'for' support 'to' rely on. Women are important in making the man 'feel' masculine. Men, on the other hand, do not call upon the help or support of women. Men achieve a sense of masculinity only in relation to women. For Maryam, originally from Seychelles, the female, (like a school pupil) has no authority to challenge or the status to hold the position of the male head/teacher. If women enter into the arena of men, they disrupt the gender order. This supports Parsons' (1955) idea of the complementary functions of distinct male and female roles. That is, isolating the function of each gender contributes to the smooth running of society (Rogers, 2001). Men were also deemed to be different from women. In the following quotation, Maryam continued with the theme of female dependency:

Emotionally we are weaker, we need more emotional support than a man does. Most of the time we will be needing him, than him needing you. (Maryam, 22)

The idea of women being needy corresponds with Maududi's (1972) belief that women possess a passive nature. Maryam, like traditional Muslim scholars, believes that women have a fragile, weak and emotional nature (al-Jibaly, 2000) because she is the 'weaker sex' (Badawi, 1992). Maryam uses this to portray masculinity as superior ('stronger') and feminine as inferior. These themes continued when asked what females considered to be un-masculine behaviour:

Not be indecisive being able to make some decisions then again they can be so rigid, but I don't like dithering men . . . masculinity is more about being a man and being confident in yourself and that comes from inner self. (Huma, 38)

Standing upright, straight, head held high rather than be like a mouse. If he doesn't have the same aggressiveness to stand up for himself, if it's a free for all and the winner takes it all. (Kausar, 49)

Masculinity was identifiable by certain traits, such as dominance, strength, taking responsibility, decisiveness and self-assuredness. Khadija, whose husband was a teacher, stated that her husband's masculinity was dependent on how 'he makes her feel':

The reason why I equate him [husband] as being masculine is because he makes me feel that he's masculine, he's protective of me. He's supportive of me, from that point of view I consider him to be masculine. I think masculinity has a lot to do with physical appearance but also mentally they've got to know who they are and be strong as well. Although I do feel I have a strong influence in our marriage, I don't think I'd like it if he just did everything I wanted him to do that wouldn't be good either. I would then feel he was weak and I wouldn't have as much respect for him, because he would just be giving in to what I asked him to do. (Khadija, 27)

Some females disliked the idea of female dominance over the male because this would place him in the feminine realm and render him weak and submissive, qualities that would denigrate and degrade a man and weaken his masculinity. The women interviewed constructed similar kinds of gendered dichotomies as male participants did, but attached quite different meanings to these and evaluated the feminine and masculine components differently. Essentially, the masculine identity is based not on an assertion of the masculine but rather on the repudiation of the feminine. As Kimmel (1994) argues, masculinity is characterised not by who one is, but by what one is not:

Just listening to the wife, taking in the wife's opinion on everything any decision-making the wife makes . . . I don't think it does justice to the man, and to the woman. Because you're negating the role of the man as Allah made him. (Kausar, 49)

Men are feminised, weakened, and emasculated, but at the same time women are masculinised. Woman occupying the same position do not accrue masculine virtue because the gender expression identity/role is incongruent with the sexed body. This shift or downplay (from the males' point of view) has a psychological impact on not only the male but also how the female perceives the male. In this way, Kausar promotes a hegemonic masculinity that allows men to be masculine while maintaining their privilege as men. This in conjunction with the view that 'if, in doing gender, men are also doing dominance and women are doing deference, the resultant social order, which supposedly reflects 'natural differences' is a powerful reinforcement and legitimator of hierarchal arrangements' (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 146). However, the 'male' [only] breadwinner classification renders the women invisible. Again, unlike their male counterparts, some female participants emphasised the male's feminine side. For Sadia, this centred on the man fulfilling the needs and protection of women:

You might consider that men and women have emotional needs and other needs such as protection, comfort, love and attention that are fulfilled within the marital relationship. Therefore, I think Islam does provide guidelines whereby it is appropriate and desired for each of the genders to fulfil the needs of the opposite partner. For example, the woman may require attention, love and protection and these kind of things to be shown for her and it's encouraged for the man to show and vice versa. (Sadia, 36)

Masculinity is understood as embracing qualities such as care and kindness corresponding with the view of some Muslim scholars (Al-Jibaly, 2000; Maqsood, 1995; Khan, 1993; Doi, 1984). Women thus incorporated masculinity with traditionally feminine characteristics (kindness and caring), yet, the idea was still grounded in dominant masculine norms concerning provision, authority and leadership.

### 8.7.3 MASCULINITY AS NEGATIVE

There were marked differences in how female participants conceptualised masculinity. Some younger female participants assigned a number of undesirable and negative characteristics to masculinity, while others believed that the separation of roles deemed one superior (masculinity) and the other inferior (femininity). Masculinity and masculine qualities served to

induce and grant men power and privilege. In the following quotation, Alma, a Bosnian born non-practising Muslim, introduces that the idea that masculine power is often used negatively:

When I was in Bosnia, I saw that men had it easier, to me that became a bad thing, and I didn't like that. They weren't expected to clean, look after the kids and work. To me masculine is almost like a negative word because they have it better than us. (Alma, 21)

Masculinity was merely a demonstration of dominance, control and 'being macho':

Masculinity is the macho man, and I'm the man! That's the word that comes to my mind. (Humaira, 29)

Macho – arrogant. Not listening to you. (Uzma, 33)

For others it was ridiculed and confined to a cultural idea of particular masculine behaviour. However, it also reflects the idea of 'doing gender':

A macho man, kind of a joke, swaggering, strong, muscles. (Shabana, 18)

I don't know probably my perspective is more from a 'Western' . . . to me masculinity is probably going down to the pub with the boys, playing football, talking about football. (Rukhsana, 33)

A masculine figure was viewed as authoritarian and created in men the expectation of unquestioned obedience from women:

Masculinity is about controlling, ego, macho, proud and arrogant, you know that you are the boss you are the leader . . . what I associate with masculine is a man being protective towards his family for the wrong reasons like for being in control, not because he cares, because he wants to control, he wants to be dominant (Nadia, 33)

All these women describe masculinity as dominating and being constructed around negative behavioural qualities. For these women, masculinity and masculine behaviour were generalised perceptions and assumptions about the characteristics men supposedly possess, how they act and how they behave. For Nadia, in order to draw upon the support and compliance of women, men present and promote the virtues of masculinity as purportedly being for the protection and good of the family. All the above participants were British born

and had been exposed to British customs and values and were more critical about overtly masculine traits. Humaira and Nadia experienced a childhood where their father exercised authority and control, which influenced their ideas about the performance of masculinity. Humaira, who was a practising Muslim, remarked that her father used physical violence to control the family. When she was 16, she left the family home to live in a hostel as a result of her turbulent and violent relationship with her father. Rukhsana, who stated that 'I don't even like calling myself a Muslim', believed that the construction of masculine and feminine identities were as much based on religion as they were on Muslim culture. These women, therefore, rejected the idea of masculinity as a natural set of behavioural attributes. Nadia goes on further to criticise traditional constructions of gender, which she believes serves a patriarchal purpose. It is the assumptions that religion presumes which constrict and confine men and women to certain appropriate traits:

I think Islam makes a lot of assumptions, that males will only have X qualities and females will only have X qualities, female strengths will be this, men's strengths will be this. I think Islam is very much judgemental. The assumption is that men will always be good leaders and females will not, and that's not true there are men that are really crap at leadership and there are females that are much better. (Nadia, 33)

According to Nadia, religion restricts masculine and feminine gender roles. Nadia portrays gender relations in Islam in the same way as Connell (1995), where gender relations are organised around power relations, which entails the obedience and passivity of women. It is interesting to note that Humaira (29) and Shabana (18) were the only practising Muslim females who described masculinity negatively. Humaira's relationship with her husband was based on equality. Both she and her husband (Bilal) reported sharing much of the domestic work, cared for their children, and were dual earners. Rukhsana, a non-practising Muslim, did not believe in the idea of discrete roles for men and for women, because they created an unequal relationship. Nadia, a feminist, was scathing about the inequality which originates from the Qur'an and is nurtured by Muslim traditional (male) scholars and by lay Muslim male.

A number of women in my research described both desirable and undesirable properties of masculinity. While some women argued that dominance and strength are innate and positive male qualities, other female participants held that this belief was the basis of the inequality in the positions of power and authority. For participants who believed in a positive masculine representation, the image of the male was embodied in a paternalistic masculinity coupled with

a strong belief that they should protect and provide for women. Women believed in a set of 'rules' and expectations of masculinity, which centred on aggression, self-sacrifice, kindness and care. Some participants used religion to justify and support a religious belief system in which men were treated and thought of as the primary breadwinner and who possessed the following traits: aggressiveness, reason, strength, ambition and initiative. These women glorified and exalted masculinity, with male achievement (in the public spheres) being the most weighty and worthy of masculine responsibilities. To talk about femininity as a category is related to issues concerning sex and gender. To talk about masculinity, however, is to talk about achievement, success and a continual expression of 'doing'. Many female participants believed that men possessed a particular 'psychological identity', 'social role', 'cultural script' and 'place in the labor force' (Stimpson, 1987). In the next section, I examine the role of the head of the family, who holds this position and why?

#### 8.8 BECAUSE I'M THE MAN! CONSTRUCTING THE ROLE OF THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY

This section examines the role/position of the head of the family and how men and women construct this position. I explore the various dimensions in the construction of this role, primarily as a way of revealing and examining emerging patterns. The decision to focus on the position of the head allows an examination of the framework participants use to legitimate this position. In doing so, I look at the differences and similarities in the ways in which people comment on their own perception of gender roles and gender hierarchies. The data gives insight in to the way religion shapes the working and domestic lives of Muslim men and women. These accounts allow us to observe the religious influence on participant's perception's of gender roles and the position one holds within the family. Brittan (1989) asks 'if the 'breadwinner ethic' has indeed collapsed among large sections of middle class men, then is there any point in talking about masculinity in terms of generalized category?' (Brittan, 1989: 2). Brittan here uses the category of 'middle class men' to dismiss the broad category of masculinity. Yet, he fails to mention the colour, race, or religion of these 'middle class men'. I challenge Brittan's assertion, especially his advice that we discard the use of masculinity as a unitary category. Moreover, if this ethic exists (albeit not rigidly) as a system supported by religion and governs the conduct and role for men, then would that imply a return to the use of a universalised category of masculinity? I would strongly argue that we can use masculinity as a unitary category. Therefore, in this section, I refer to the category of 'masculinity' in favour of the pluralized 'masculinities'.

### 8.8.1 THE POSITION OF THE HEAD

Recognising the importance of the position, participants provided an account as to who should hold this position. The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that 89% (31) of females and 85% (28) of males regarded the husband/father of the family as the head. However, different reasons were cited for this:

The man's role is of responsibility . . . as a breadwinner as a leader of the house. God has put a person - the man as a leader but leader with democratic authority . . . even though he is the leader he still needs the cabinet. (Zubair, Male 61)

Zubair, a Pakistani who was the head of his family, noted the 'democratic' nature of the family underlying the role's importance for the family as a whole. Men, in particular demonstrated an awareness of what this role required and involved. Kamran's (Male 29) pithy response 'because I'm the man! I'm the head' illustrates the position to be rigidly associated with one's gender. Kamran's masculinity appears to be heavily invested in his role and active performance as the head and breadwinner of the family. As Brandth & Kvande (1998) point out 'hegemonic masculinity is strongly associated with income generating work, and income generating work is considered a central source of masculine identity' (Brandth & Kvande, 1998: 296). Nadia, a single, non-practising Muslim who lived with her mother, believed that a man should not hold this position on the basis of his gender:

I don't believe in the male heading the household . . . I don't think they should be given that position by right because they are male I think they should earn that (Nadia, Female 33)

Zubair, however, perceived the system more favourably:

When I say that the man is the leader, it's if he is playing the leading role. The husband has authority, but only if he fits in the category of the husband, not just of the man. (Zubair, Male 61).

According to this view there is a distinction between being a 'man' and being the 'husband', that is, being the head is performance related not an ascribed position for men. For Zubair, this is an essential precondition, since this role is subject to performance, he adds cautiously 'you're only given that role if you perform that role'. This view reflects Maqsood's (1995) view that the husband is the head only when he demonstrates himself as deserving of that position.

Despite this, gender appears to be a significant, if not an overriding factor: the man is given this role by virtue of his sex ('being a man'). Contrary to Zubair's view, the role of the head is essentially 'his'. The underlying premise is that this role is male orientated. Haider explained how he and his wife arrived at the decision that he would be the head:

We discussed the issue; we were setting a parameter of operation. We made a decision that if there was an issue of conflict then my wife would respect my decision, and that was something we both agreed on rightly or wrongly. (Haider, Male 32)

The quotation demonstrates that the roles attempt to bring both some form of regulation to their life as well as determining both male and female performance of particular roles. Yet, for some participants the position was built upon a process of negotiation. Uzma, a community worker, also negotiated her position in her marriage to reinvent her role primarily to accommodate her husband's position as the head, or as she referred to it as being the 'active partner'. Uzma, a non-practising Muslim, demonstrates Maududi's (1972) argument that one partner should be 'active' (male) and 'the other receptive and passive' (female). Nevertheless, Uzma admits that she resisted playing the traditional female role and the change required a considerable compromise:

When I first started in the marriage I would say I was the active partner and he [husband] was the passive partner. I think when you fight it that's when you get all the problems but I don't fight it anymore, I used to. I fought it at the start when I was more active . . . I did try to play the male role. I think it's changed now . . . he's becoming more active and I've become more passive. (Uzma, Female 33)

Uzma's situation supports the idea that 'roles are situated identities - assumed and relinquished as the situation demands - rather than master identities' (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 128). Uzma revealed that a source of contention was that 'my husband initially struggled with the thought of me out working'. Despite Uzma's financial independence, her husband Kamran, believed that 'Islam has said that a woman has to look after the house and it's the man's duty to earn the money for his children and wife'. Yet, Uzma worked before she got married and continued to do so afterwards, moreover, she earned more than her husband, but his comments illustrate that what he believes is not reflected in the way he lives his life. It is important to highlight, however, that Kamran's views were shaped by his upbringing in Pakistan, while Uzma valued her independence and her upbringing in Scotland. Despite this, by no longer 'fighting it' she accepted her 'passive' position within her marriage. Nevertheless,



she pointed out that although they made decisions through discussion, 'he's definitely the person in charge'. Contrary to her frequent claims of 'shared' decision-making, she was becoming the passive partner irrespective of her equal financial input. As a result, Uzma indicated a move towards the traditionally demarcated gender roles based upon the notion of activity and passivity. Her situation reveals how gender roles are negotiated because of changing lifestyle/situations. Nevertheless, others felt gender to be less important:

My wife is the head, because she's that kind of personality, she's very assertive. She wasn't working for the first 4/5 years of our marriage and even though I was the breadwinner and by definition you are the head . . . psychological. I wasn't . . . but certainly in the last 5/6 years I have to say she is. (Farooq, Male 40)

Farooq, a medical Doctor and a non-practising Muslim, was one of the few male participants who regarded his wife to be the head. He associates his wife as being the head in terms of her assertiveness and in psychological terms he is the introvert while she the extrovert. His wife Huma, however, responded facetiously:

He's [husband] the captain standing at the oar and I'm standing behind him and I've got ropes to the oar and I'm moving them for him so he doesn't know [laughs] . . . I think my husband is the head . . . certainly, previously, making decisions. (Huma, Female 38)

Huma, a public health officer also a non-practising Muslim, appeared to be reluctant at first to state that her husband was the head. Although her first comment can be construed as the position being shared in the family, she commits herself by saying that her husband is the head. It is also noteworthy that she did not confirm her husband's view that she was the head of the family. She attempts to masculinise her husband by claiming that he is the head and feminise herself in the process. One notable exception was Sadia's (Female, 36) situation. As the sole female breadwinner in the sample, reversing roles was a matter of economic choice and personal circumstance. A household based on this structure challenges the traditional gender role ideology. Indeed, in her comments there was a desire to escape gendered assumptions: 'I don't really see that I play that role [the head], but I would say that I take a lot of the responsibility of the household'. She detaches her responsibility of the household from the position of the head. This was distinct from the views expressed by many male participants, who constructed their role partly on the basis of being the breadwinner. This is illustrated in the following example:

I see myself as the head from the point of view of finances but I don't think I would be the head of the family [in a] kind of pastoral or spiritual carer. (Omar, Male 37)

Omar, a British born Pakistani medical Doctor, and non-practising Muslim, recognised the position men attain by becoming the breadwinner, however, Sadia, by forgoing the position of the head, describes herself as an equal partner. Her husband Haroon, similarly stated: 'we don't really have a head, because we tend to share and discuss things. It's come to habit we work together and consolidate on things'. In general, however, almost all participants talked about being equal partners within their relationship. There was mutual respect amongst couples, and male participants often talked about decisions being discussed with their spouse. Therefore, the role of husband as the head of the family was shaped by a participatory decision-making process:

We discuss issues and then come to an agreement. He [husband] will express his feelings and let me know how he feels and lets me make the decision. (Fatima, Female 44)

She [wife] appreciates my ability and said ok you are in charge, but when it comes to decisions we talk and we both decide, I share her ideas. (Hameed, Male 50)

We don't give orders to each other, we share. We both reach a mutual agreement, I have to be convinced and he [husband] has to be convinced. (Rabia, Female 25)

#### 8.8.2 A 'DEGREE ABOVE WOMAN'

The most prominent justification used for males holding the position of the head was that Allah ordains the position. Both male and female participants drew my attention to the Qur'an with some male participants quoting directly from the Qur'an to justify or explain the position. The verse (Qur'an 4:34) in question was used to support the role of the man as the head and to explain the responsibility that a man has in relation to women. The obligation to provide the wife with *mahr* (dower) is complemented by the Qur'an's unconditional and specific charge to the man to support his wife in marriage. Consequently, a sanctioned framework that positions men as the head's of their family shapes the authority of this role. The man is the head of the family because all organisations, whether big or small, operate efficiently with a leader:

In the house, there are two high figures: the husband and wife, but one should agree who has the final authority. If you have a ship with two

Captains, it will sink, in the same way in the family you will not survive if you have two heads. (Abbas, Male 52)

Abbas understands the issue similarly to the scholar Yusuf Qaradawi, who similarly argues that 'without a captain the ship of the household will flounder and sink'<sup>2</sup>. Abbas also holds the 'two high figures' in equal stature. He recognises the importance of a head for the survival of the family, and his analogy of the sinking ship demonstrates this need. The analogy indicates the necessity for clear boundaries between men and women in order to prescribe responsibilities and rights. His views reflect Shoomaan's (1996) description of men being like a governor, a master for his wife. Samra in a similar vein, describes the importance of the position of the head:

To compliment the functioning in the household there can only be one manager who makes the final decisions, just as in a company where the manager makes the decisions. In most cases the manager has the most experience hence, elder, wiser and more stable financially and economically than the rest of the employees equally the same way in a family situation. (Samra, Female 25)

Abbas, who was in his 50s and Samra in her 20s were practising Muslims, and despite the age difference both participants believed that a successful and harmonious household must recognise one head. Some participants presented the position as a requisite for the harmony of the family. It was considered important to decide who has the 'final authority':

It is always better that there is one person to do the final judgement that will keep the peace, and it will keep the unity. If everyone started expressing their opinion and authority then it will split very quickly and differences start. (Hanif, Male 55)

Male as well as female participants defended the position by calling to attention to both the importance of gender roles and to how it maintains the social order within the household: 'you can't have anarchy, the whole thing will just fall apart, just like a ship has to have a captain' (Khadija, Female 27). The words used to describe the importance of the role, 'peace' and 'anarchy', characterises gender roles as creating harmonious relations. Indeed, the elimination of these boundaries would trouble and disrupt the gender structure (Lucal, 1999). Yet, for some, discussing the position of the head the basis must be extracted from the Qur'an. Here, Haider offers an explication of the verse:

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.Islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-Englsh-Ask\\_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503543230](http://www.Islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-Englsh-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503543230)

The verse has two parts . . . [reads from the verse] it starts off by saying that men are *qawwamūn*. *Qawa* – is to stand up, if you imagine two heights one has a bit more height over the other. It says that this position of man over woman is based on them being caretakers or being ones who bring goodness to the household. So the authority of man over woman is by him being responsible for maintaining things in a good way. And it says: "a household does need a leader", he said "it needs a manager". This level of degree is by the fact they are more readier or more prepared to carry out a particular role and then the other thing he gives a category, for them being responsible for the house financially and the household (Haider, Male 32)

During the interview, Haider paused to pick up and quote from the Qur'an's commentary to both elaborate and validate his view. The aspect of one height over the other, depicts a picture of one (man) looking over the other (woman) as a protector or guardian. Abbas offers a similar appraisal to that of Haider's. He believes that this 'degree' is fundamental to understanding the man's position:

In Islam the male or the husband has *Qawwamūn* – in English I think it translates as guardian. *Qawwamūn* means that he is the one responsible for money by bringing the income, of protecting the wife or guiding the family to the proper path. It is his responsibility because Allah (SWT) will ask him before her why the children are committing sin. It is his responsibility but also his privilege. This is made clear in Islam. (Abbas, Male 52)

Haider and Abbas refer to the Qur'an to legitimate their positions, both men spoke Arabic and were thus able to offer a more detailed view from the Qur'an, unlike other non-Arabic speaking participants. They translate the verse 'in a way that emphasises that the man is the woman's superior and *protector*, i.e. the aspects of care in the maintenance relationship in marriage' (Dahl, 1997: 146). For some participants, religion provides a set of normative attributes and roles against which man is 'measured' in terms of his performance as the head of the household. It is noteworthy that many females equally accepted the man as the head. Despite forcefully asserting their equality with men, some held the view of 'men being higher than women' (Kaiser, Female 49). Nafisa makes a similar point:

You need a protector to live in this world. Allah has made men and women both equal but in only one situation is the man superior than woman that's in the household. He is one step above the woman but in everywhere else the rules and the regulations are the same. Allah has made men stronger to provide for his wife and family. (Nafisa, Female 37)

Although Nafisa makes reference to needing a 'protector', she was divorced, in paid employment, studied at college, lived on her own, and was an independent woman. Yet, she views her way of life as being outside of the framework provided by her religion. She indicates that women require male protection and this security is given by men because 'Allah has made men stronger'. Participants considered it important to trace this position to the Qur'an. As Zahid (Male, 50), a Pakistani practising Muslim points out: 'I think if you say you are a Muslim that's the way it is'. There was no debate, no questioning of this 'rule'. However, this responsibility is not without accountability:

It is upon him [father] to guide his family for he is going to be accountable to Allah for his family. (Samra, Female 25)

It is men, not women, who will be asked by Allah to account for their performance as head of the family. Again, participants qualified this authority positively:

There's a way of putting across your authority and your leadership. For example, the way the shepherd is in charge of his sheep, in that way I would say the man is in charge of his family, a shepherd could beat his sheep up in order for them to go a particular way or he could coax them lovingly so there are different ways of authority. (Yasir, Male 37)

However, many participants disliked the term 'authority' because of the negative and oppressive connotations and several would correct me: 'not authority . . . but responsibility to perform that role' (Zubair, Male 61). For the above men, it is religion, which provides guidance about who, why, and how to play this role.

## 8.9 ROLE REVERSAL

Morgan (1992) states that a 'strategy for studying men and masculinity is to study situations where masculinity is put on the line. He points out two situations where masculinity is challenged, namely when men are unemployed and when men enter female occupations (Morgan, 1992, cited in Brandth & Kvande, 1998: 293). In relation to this, an important issue to examine was participants' feelings and views concerning reversing roles. Role reversal inevitably disturbs the conventional patterns of gender roles and relations between men and women, whether through unemployment or financial benefits. For this reason, participants were asked the following questions: 'What is your view of a man/woman taking on the traditional role of the opposite sex, the man staying at home, looking after the children, doing

the housework and the woman being the sole breadwinner?' In line with other research, the responses revealed that 'both women and men are ambivalent about women as providers' (Thomson & Walker, 1989: 850). A number of male participants spoke of an infringement on their male identity, which they perceived to be a direct consequence of reversing roles: 'I can't do that [reverse roles]. That's not in me, no, I wouldn't allow her to do this' (Kamran, Male 29). Kamran expresses his masculine authority by prohibiting his wife from undertaking employment, which would undermine his position as the head/breadwinner. He also reluctantly acknowledges considering being at home *only* if he was physically unable to work. There appears to be a sense of degradation in 'staying at home'. However, for Zubair reversing roles would be justifiable in the case of unemployment:

If the wife is a Doctor and the husband has been laid off and if he can't get a job, it would be stupid to have the wife home and go on the social security. It's a sensible thing. (Zubair, Male 61)

Despite this, Zubair added 'If Islamically he is not fulfilling his duties that man doesn't have the honour of the leader'. The stigma attached to men who are situated in the home directly impinges on their male identity. Male participants also felt uncomfortable about their wives being the main breadwinner. Nevertheless, some participants did present specific circumstances where they may consider reversing roles:

It is better for her [wife] to concentrate on her job at home if they need that [role reversal] it is allowed. This means that because we put it under 'if' this arrangement cannot continue forever, it should be temporary until they come back to the normal life. (Abbas, Male 52)

Appeals to 'nature' as evident in Abbas's reference to 'normal life' gives it a certain legitimacy, in contrast, reversing roles is portrayed as out with the 'normal' standards. A shift in gender roles was met with contemptuous cynicism as Kauser cites religion to remonstrate the set-up:

I would feel that the husband should be trying to do something about it. If it's a totally essential and economic decision and there are no other options I would have to do it. But I wouldn't necessarily be happy about it, because it's not the role that a woman or man should be playing. In its real true sense it would be un-Islamic but depending on the situation, if it's by choice it is not *haram* [prohibited] but against in principle. (Kauser, Female 49)

Interestingly, when role reversal was presented as a choice made on practical economic grounds it was deemed irrelevant by some participants. The amounts of the female/wife's earnings were irrelevant:

If God has given me health, hands and legs to work even if I earned £100 a week and if she could earn £500 a week I wouldn't let her. (Kamran, Male 29)

Ibrahim makes a similar point:

If I was earning 10k and she [wife] could potentially earn 40k, in Islam her money is her money, she can do whatever she wants with it, that's not going to stop me. If I was a dustman and worked 7 days a week I'd still do it. (Ibrahim, Male 26)

The points raised by the participants are similar to the argument put forward by Muslim scholars like Hewitt (1997) and Badawi (1992), who state that the male responsibility does not decrease if the wife's wealth/earnings are greater than her husband's. So heavily associated is the male identity with the role as provider, the wife's income is irrelevant because 'the duty of maintenance is unilateral and absolute on the husband's part' (Dahl, 1997: 146). Ibrahim's comments reflect the verse in the Qur'an: '... to men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn' (Qur'an 4:32). Kamran's response to the perceived threat to his male identity is to forbid his wife from doing so. Because his authority would be challenged he believed he has the right to exert his control on his wife's employment. Uzma, who was present at the time of her husband's interview, responded to her husband's rebuke:

He [husband] was saying he wouldn't let me go out to work, I mean that's a loada bollocks! Cause I am, I've been working for the 6 years of our marriage and before that as well. (Uzma, Female 33)

Uzma emphasised the importance of her income and her role in the family. Yet, Kamran and Ibrahim both assert their masculine authority rather than have it dictated by their wives' income or economic position in the marriage. Thus, any change to this proscription appears to be an 'unnatural' infringement on the role of the man:

I don't like a man sitting in the house doing the cooking and cleaning. I go out to work and return I look like the man and he looks like the woman, it makes the situation the opposite. God has said that the woman should stay in the home, if we live strictly by Islam the woman should stay at home and the husband goes out to work. (Fatima, Female 44)

Since the duty and role of providing is intrinsically gendered when the female assumes or takes on the role of provider, she metamorphically 'looks like the man'. This is explained if we consider that 'we see two discrete sexes and two distinguishable genders because our society is built on two classes of people "women" and "men," once gender category is given, the attributes of the person are also gendered: whatever a "woman" is has to be "female"; whatever a "man" is has to be "male"' (Lorber, 1993: 569). Fatima, an Iraqi practising Muslim housewife, uses the phrase 'sitting in the house' to strengthen the idea of the male taking on an inappropriate gender role, while at the same time marginalising those men who opt to stay at home. The man is not only demoted, but displaced as he moves away from his original self as the provider and loses his position as the head. Also interestingly, the female usurps what is rightfully the man's space and role. This corresponds with Dahl's view that in Islam 'there are original and natural limits between the masculine and the feminine qualities and tasks, but limits must also be *prescribed* between the sexes' (Dahl, 1997: 97). Indeed, men who opted to stay at home were the recipients of ridicule: 'you have some poofters who are role reversing, who stay at home and let their wife's work. What sort of man does that!'. The use of the term 'poofter' by Ibrahim indicates 'not male' and as associated to the heterosexual male, 'not me':

Signifies a failure of masculinity, a failure of living up to a gendered standard of behaviour, and a gendered standard of identity . . . the use of such terms demonstrates that to levy a successful insult, it was enough for these young men to claim that their target was insufficiently male; he was inadequately masculine, inadequately gendered (Hopkins, 1996: 96).

Ibrahim casts aspersions on the masculinity of men who choose to stay at home by assigning them with an inferior male status and in turn strengthening and validating heterosexual males who work. This also reveals that the issue does not simply revolve around status, but also sexuality: not only are men emasculated by occupying a female only position, they are also degraded sexually. In relation to this, Myslik (1996) points out that 'men are socialized to be dominant and aggressive, to conform strongly to established sex roles and to ridicule or punish those who deviate from those roles' (Myslik, 1996: 160). In the same way, Abbas (Male, 52) questions their masculinity: 'I think this man should have a re-think about his masculinity I think he is not a proper man'. Sumaiya, a practising Muslim, drew upon personal experience to put forward her view concerning role reversal and the impact it had on her husband's masculine identity:



I was the breadwinner and I was feeling sorry for the way he [husband] was feeling, that he's doing something . . . that doesn't suit his personality. Obviously, there is no man who would like his wife to be a breadwinner, it's a strange feeling, but you come to a situation where you have to accept it and you can't help it. At that point, it becomes how feminine you act in that situation. I was the breadwinner . . . but I wasn't making him feel that I am the breadwinner. (Sumaiya, Female 49)

Roles, therefore, were negotiated in light of changing circumstances. Interestingly, it appears to be a woman's duty to help the husband 'feel like a man' even if she earns more or is the head (by virtue of being the sole breadwinner). Despite changing roles, Sumaiya, continued to assume her feminine (passive) role in spite of also playing the 'active' male role. At no point did she usurp her husband's rightful position of the head. The inability to fulfil the socially and, for many, a religiously prescribed role as provider of the family creates a sense of social impotence that undermines the man's sense of self. However, some felt constrained and inhibited in reversing roles:

If I was to say to my family that my wife is out working and I'm sitting in the house doing all the cleaning, they would say that that person is weak, and the wife is ruling the house. (Saeed, Male 34)

Saeed, a practising Muslim whose wife was a university student' felt that a shift in roles would render the man weak and the woman powerful. It is precisely this perception that creates a sense of it being at odds with the male status and role. Yasir, who was involved in *da'wa* [missionary work], also expressed reservation:

As a member of the Islamic Society of Britain and somebody whose involved in calling people to Islam, I would find it very unwise to sit at home and let her [wife] go to work. The perception is "look at him doing Islamic work while his wife's working that's disgusting!" (Yasir, Male 37)

In relation to Yasir's comment, participants validated such concerns by referring to the tenets of Islam:

Islam says that as far as men are concerned they should be the provider's, from his earnings half the earning should be spent on his wife and children and the other half on himself. But if a woman is earning she can keep all her earnings, she doesn't have to give her husband a penny . . . if she is providing then it means that she is doing *ehsaan* [favour] on him. (Nafisa, Female 37)

In a similar vein, Yasir also adds:

It is said that when a man spends on a woman it is obligatory for him to do that, when a woman spends on a man it is perceived as an act of charity. (Yasir, Male 37)

Nafisa and Yasir's reference to 'charity' suggests the wife's kindness and compassion towards her husband. The word *ehsaan*, refers to a favour or privilege a woman bestows upon her husband. As Dahl (1997) explains, the husband has an absolute responsibility to support his wife. This duty also extends in the support of his children, thus, the wife and children must be maintained by the father. In contrast, a wife is not bound by any prescribed rule to maintain her husband, children or herself for that matter. This is irrespective of the women's wealth. In offering these explanations, some participants identify role reversal as conflicting with Islamic principles. There are constraining (religious) structures that operate against reversing roles. Others reluctantly acknowledged certain circumstances that would permit a restructuring of the division of work. A distinctive feature of the question on role reversal was to examine how this would challenge participants' perception of traditional gender roles and how it would affect the position of the man as the head. If the woman was the sole breadwinner would she be regarded as the head? Responses were conflicting as the following quotation illustrates:

I think the woman is the head, because she's earning the money and she is acting like the man (Fatima, Female 44).

In contrast Abbas (Male, 52) states:

According to Islam it is still him. Because he has the *qawwamūn*, this will never be taken from him as far as he is the male, if he surrenders his male character, which can't be done.

Abbas refers back to the verse which positions man as the guardian of the house. Huma a non-practising Muslim, on the other hand, asserts that by definition you are the head of the household in economic terms:

I think if you are wanting to relate it to the person who is the full time worker and the breadwinner . . . if it is from an economic point of view, then of course it will be the mother. (Huma, Female 38)

However, there was a struggle not only to reframe but also to come to terms with this new structure. Tensions were evident from some participant's responses:

Would she become the head? My first feeling is no. There's something wrong there I just don't like it [laughs]. I can't say I would be happy with that, I can't see myself saying right you're in charge, even if I was providing total education and care to the children . . . doing the cooking, the washing . . . and she went out and came back and just sat down, I still couldn't see that. (Haider, Male 32)

Participants found it hard to reinvent the male gender role outside of the traditional construct of the male breadwinner role. In particular, there was a problem with 'giving up' the position of the head, which many [men] strongly felt to be an integral and essential part of their masculine gender identity. The following extract reveals how Usman, an Iraqi and practising Muslim, rationalises his position in light of reversing roles:

Interviewer: In that situation [role reversal] who would be the head?

Participant: I don't really bother about who is the head, as long as both of us can have a successful life, bring up kids properly . . . but I think I have the responsibility to look after a lot of the other financial points within and outside the house.

Interviewer: Would you still be the head?

Participant: Yes, because I would still make sure the bills were paid . . . if there was a condition where I had to stay at home; look after my children, my wife was the only one who worked for money that's not a problem. I would still feel responsible for the entire family. Yes, I would still be the head of the family. It's in my nature . . . I would still be the head.

Interviewer: Because you're the man?

Participant: No. I think it doesn't matter if I or my wife is the one who is earning the money. I still have responsibility as a man towards the whole family.

Interviewer: So responsibility comes down to the man?

Participant: Yes, I think so.

Interviewer: What is that responsibility?

Participant: Say for instance, something has happened in the house repair wise or something to do with the bill, I always tend to follow on this, my wife doesn't, so that's the difference. That's when the roles come into play I take the head role in that. It doesn't matter if I'm the main provider or she is. (Usman, Male 29).

From the extract above several points emerge, Usman initially rejects the importance of the head ('I don't really bother about who is the head'), despite placing himself in that position. At the same time, he underlines the importance of being financially responsible for the family, the position is clearly a gendered one which is illustrated in his comments about it being 'in his nature'. Usman negates the importance of financial provision and introduces the issue of 'nature' and 'his responsibility'. He shifts the focus from being the head financially to being responsible for 'his' family as a man. He considers the importance of his responsibility by

tenuously associating it with tasks such as making sure the bills are paid, therefore, resisting the threat of being disempowered and losing his masculine privilege and position. The above account unveils his unwillingness to not consider his wife as the head, but more significantly to not give up this role. Therefore, changing roles does not necessarily imply the female being the head. Usman rejects this idea. Some male participants pointed out that being the breadwinner was not a means of deciding or establishing who the head is:

The earning member is not the head, the wife might be earning . . . in Islam it cannot be reversed . . . if the wife is bringing in the money that doesn't mean that she can dictate terms . . . you go back to the teachings of Islam our Prophet, and when the Prophet started his business it was his wife who provided the money, and at that time the Prophet had no money, in spite of that Khadija (R.A.<sup>3</sup>) still respected the Prophet, she never dictated to him or degraded him, so that is our example. (Hanif, Male 55)

Going by the strictures outlined above in relation to the position of the head, we see gender distinctions are rigidly enforced and the possibility of change is circumscribed:

It's not an issue of money, the issue is that the man should be out working. I don't think it will be a peaceful house, because it's not a woman's burden to take all the responsibility to be the provider. (Zahid, Male 50)

Work affords men a basis from which they derive their sense of identity and seek self-affirmation. Zahid goes on further to emphasise that the man 'should be out working'. Men establish themselves in the public world, while within the private sphere their work is neither recognised nor rewarded. It was for this reason that many men felt uneasy and confused about what it means to be a man when placed in a new situation. For Sadia and Haroon, this has meant adapting to an equal partnership. Haroon, for example, adapted to his new role as a househusband, however, he refrained from identifying either himself or his wife as the head. Indeed, by being at home he defines his role as being the parent and primary carer of his children:

Because our child is so young, I personally don't want her [daughter] to be left with other people at this stage for long periods of time . . . I think the priority is being with the children. (Haroon, Male 36)

This situation did not concern him greatly, primarily because he perceived it to be temporary.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Radia'llah 'Anha*: May Allah be pleased with her.

#### 8.9.1 FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLD'S

According to West & Zimmerman (1987) 'the accepted cultural perspective on gender views women and men as naturally and unequivocally defined categories of being with distinctive psychological and behavioural propensities that can be predicated from their reproductive functions' (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 127-128). This was a view held by a number of male and female participants. In relation to the question about a female household head, participants were primarily concerned with the emotional qualities of the woman. Much of the discussion was centred on the physical and emotional differences between men and women. The idea draws a parallel with Ellison and Bartkowski's (2002) study on conservative Protestants in America where 'proponents of the traditionalist [Protestant] perspective argue that distinctively 'masculine' traits-including logic, strength, assertiveness, and instrumentalism-uniquely, equip men to function as leaders in the domestic realm' (Ellison & Bartkowski, 2002: 954). The following quotation relates to this:

Allah has put a few emotions in women that only a woman can have and not the man, and because of these emotions she can sometime stray, but a man can cope with it because he doesn't have those emotions to sway him, he has a stronger judgement. (Kausar, Female 49)

Hanif concurs with Kausar:

The emotional factors are different for men and different for women, and again women's understanding, women's emotion vary with her hormonal status, and this sometimes can jeopardise good thinking. (Hanif, Male 55)

It was argued that the woman, because of her 'nature', is more suited to playing the traditional female role as the housewife/mother. Ellison and Bartkowski (2002) assert that men are thought to be, by nature, more aggressive and logical and thus more able for competition in the world of paid work. Women, in contrast are understood to be gifted with a unique ability for sensitivity, care and service to others that makes them 'distinctly more suitable for homemaking roles' (Ellison & Bartkowski, 2002: 975). Male participants invoked the discourse of difference to defend their position of the head. Although a significant proportion of females in the sample were in employment (63%), traditional roles continued to inform their views. Supporting this Maryam comments:

You want somebody to look up to, somebody you depend on. I would say that person is my husband. I think it's basically the person who is the example of the house who is the head. (Maryam, Female 22)

In contrast, some men stated that the woman in the home plays a supportive role:

There is nothing in Islam that says woman is the head of the family, it is the husband's right to be the head, men and women should stay in the categories that they are best suited to. (Rashid, Male 35)

When asked who would be the head if the roles were reversed, 18% (6) of males and only 12% (4) females answered the female. It is the rigid adherence to gendered roles, which inhibited participants from reframing gender roles if there was a change in the financial situation. This generated a number of conflicting issues:

Obviously, the lady would be the head, but . . . it's not natural, the system itself is an unnatural system. Whenever you disturb the natural system . . . for example, genetic modification or genetic engineering, it's always causes so much trouble, the same way whenever we disturb the natural system it will affect the family. (Najma, Female 50)

Najma, a Pakistani housewife and practising Muslim, locates gender roles in the context of nature and inevitably any 'change' to the structure would be considered 'unnatural'. Again, participants would return to the idea that the female head is an infringement to male masculinity:

Yeah, the woman would be the head. But to the detriment of the man losing his responsibility all together. The man could be a mouse and people come to your door to attack your house and he just does nothing. He needs to lead his family out of those kinda problems and situations. (Yasir, Male 37)

Yasir demonstrates the association between the female head and the impact it would have on the male and his gender identity. In his view, a reversal contributes to the loss of his physical power, in effect, he is emasculated. Men expressed a deep emotional connection with the role, revealing it as an integral part of not only their view of the self, but also their identity as Muslim men. Yaseen, although single, revealed the emotional satisfaction that he feels men acquire by playing this role:

It feels good when you take care of the family, you go out and come back, find food for you made . . . they [family] don't say thank you, but you feel that they like what you're doing, there's an appreciation. (Yaseen, 17 Male)

There appears to be a considerable emotional investment in the masculine identity of the provider. It is interesting to note, however, that just as there were certain conditions that permitted reversing roles there were certain circumstances that would recognise the woman as the head of the family:

My husband was working in Syria for nine months, during that time I was left to be in charge of the house, and all the finances. I would be the head in his absence or if he was ill. (Khadija, Female 27)

While Yasir had this to say:

Yeah, she would be the head . . . after I dropped dead I think! I just think at the end of the day the buck stops with me, because Allah tells us what the position of man is in the Qur'an. (Yasir, Male 37)

Nevertheless, the female in valid circumstances, such as the absence or in death of the husband, is considered the head. Again, the participants would only consider the female as the head under special circumstances. Drawing upon the responses from the interviews, the findings reveal that couples construct the role that they play within the family according to a religious/essentialist framework.

#### 8.10 CONCLUSION

In examining male and female views of masculinity, we find that the term masculinity is based essentially on the relationship of difference. In general, male and female practising Muslims acknowledged that they played different roles in public and private realms. Their understandings and interpretations followed a belief in the divinely decreed difference between men and women. However, given the large number of practising Muslims in the sample, we find a direct association between some participants' religiosity and an affirmation and glorification of masculinity. Yet, because of their unwavering belief in a natural difference between men and women, they failed to see the conscious effort on the part of males and the continual support from women to bolster gender differentiation and hierarchy. Indeed, they did not perceive this disparity to be detrimental because it was the way 'Allah made them'. Although there were similarities in the way that men and women perceived masculinity and masculine qualities (responsibility, provider, protector), there were also distinct differences.

Women differed from their male counterparts in that they stressed the man's masculinity in relation to the woman's femininity. Male participants did not express the link or fusion between feminine (kindness and care) and masculine (protector and provider) qualities that some traditional scholars and female participants highlighted. Instead, there was a focus on the masculine role of provision and protection. Men were far more concerned with aspects of 'doing masculinity': working, providing, protecting and being independent. Male and female participants however did converge in some aspects. For instance, some men argued that women 'needed' the love and the protection of men. Some female participants agreed that because women were 'emotionally weaker' in comparison to men, they required men's protection and care. Men were portrayed as being stoic and independent while women emotional and dependant. Men continually worked to distinguish themselves from the feminine through their dress and appearance, communicational style and strength. The central themes that emerged from male participants were the belief that men and women are different biologically and emotionally and that men must not demonstrate feminine characteristic. When we looked at women's views on masculinity, we found that women generally portrayed the ideal masculine man as possessing the ability to be strong, to be protective, and, above all, to be the provider. Corresponding with the views articulated by traditional scholars that men must have some qualities which are seen as feminine (being kind, caring and loving), female participants were more inclined than males to view these 'feminine' traits as being important defining features of 'good' Muslim male masculine qualities.

Female participants made this connection explicit in their views on masculinity, while men choose to highlight typical masculine qualities. For a number of male and female participants, being masculine entailed a specific 'psychological identity', 'social role', 'cultural script' and 'place in the labour force' (Stimpson, 1987). All these aspects overlap to produce and correspond with the ideal they believe religion prescribes for men. Masculinity was as a core constitutive category for men, it shaped their lives and understandings and shaped their belief about the role of women and femininity. However, some male and female participants (largely non-practising Muslims) believed that relations based on gender and the apparent natural differences between men and women are rooted in power relations which work to maintain inequality: a situation of male dominance and female subordination. Women, particularly those who were non-practising, were more likely to dismiss cultural and religious ideals about appropriate male and female behaviour. Moreover, in their description and brief discussions about masculinity, they relied on cultural attributes without drawing on essentialist ideas.



The final part of this chapter examined male and female views on the construction of the head of the family. Participants not only used arguments based on nature, they supported this claim by referring to specific verses in the Qur'an which refer to men as the providers for the family. There was a remarkable perseverance in spite of female employment and financial independence to maintain a gender hierarchy. While a whole host of influencing factors were presented, religion featured prominently in the thinking of many participants, both female and male. The data reveals that a great majority of both men and women believed in the supremacy of religious patriarchal gender roles, as both 'patrilineality and patriarchy are a part of the basic cultural foundations of religion (i.e.the Qur'an') (Combs-Schilling, 1989: 60). Interestingly, it was evident that women 'helped' men feel masculine. It was their understanding and support of their role as the head of the household that allowed men to feel masculine. Gender is unquestioned as a social construct and yet at the same time it is assumed to be based on nature. The participants, to use West and Zimmerman's (1987) phrase were 'doing gender'. Nevertheless, there was evidence of a recognition towards alternative modes of living, determined by either choice or economic circumstances. While some male participants maintained power relations, others who were in a role reversal system, sought to avoid patterns of control and insisted on an egalitarian relationship. In examining the meanings of masculinity, one cannot avoid the issue of sexuality. In the next chapter, I discuss how heterosexual Muslims perceive and construct homosexuality. This allows a slight shift in the direction of exploring the meanings of masculinity. I explore how it affects their understanding of gender and more specifically on masculinity. Other questions I address are whether heterosexual males construct homosexuality in a way that legitimises their own masculinity. Is there a positive correlation between being a practising Muslim and negative views on homosexuality? How do both men and women interpret Islam's position on homosexuality? How do heterosexual Muslims conceive of homosexual Muslims, their lifestyle, relationships, parenting and religiosity? This chapter identifies how the dominant gender ideology and stereotypes about homosexuals locate homosexual men outside of the category of 'masculinity'.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY BY MUSLIM HETEROSEXUALS

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the views held by heterosexual Muslim participants towards homosexuality and homosexuals. It aims to discover the connection between participants' attitudes towards homosexuality and how this supports their understanding of gender and gender roles. Participants' views are based on the response to the following three questions: What is your view on homosexuality? Do you think homosexual relationships are as equal as heterosexual relationships? Do you feel that heterosexuality is the only acceptable form of having a relationship? The second question in particular was used to illustrate whether the participants would differentiate 'between the value of homosexual persons and the value of homosexual behaviour' (Bassett et al., 2001). The general response from the questions reveal that attitudes towards homosexuality are constructed around the Qur'an's and *Ahadith's* prohibition of homosexuality, largely through the belief in the unnaturalness of homosexuality/homosexual relationships and the inability of homosexuals to procreate naturally. To my knowledge, my study is the first to assess the attitudes of heterosexual Muslims. To understand these attitudes towards homosexuality, a careful examination of the Qur'an's position is required because of the impact and influence religion has on participants understanding of homosexuality deserves consideration.

#### 9.2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Despite the contribution of sociologists to the study of homosexuality, sociological academic enquiry has been lacking in the study of homophobia (hatred and fear of homosexuality) (Bernstein, 2004). Indeed, research on homophobia has featured dominantly in the field of psychology and is concentrated on the development of reliable and valid scales for measuring attitudes toward people who are homosexual (Herek, 1994). In this chapter, I use qualitative accounts given by participants to examine their attitudes, thoughts and feelings towards homosexuality. All major monotheistic religions are held to be profoundly homophobic (Warner, 2000). Islam, in particular, is explicit in its condemnation of homosexuality (Duran, 1993; Schild, 1992). While the role Christianity plays in the perseverance of negative views on homosexuality amongst Christians has been examined (Bassett et al., 2000; Batson et al., 1999; 2001), this exploration has been absent in Islam. There is a need to examine the degree to which religion impacts on Muslim perceptions and understandings of homosexuality.

As Muslim homosexuals are becoming increasingly more visible and vocal in Britain (reflected in the emergence Al-Fatiha<sup>1</sup>), this is of particular interest given the marginal growth in research on homosexual South Asians including Muslims (Yip, 2002; 2004). My discussion focuses specifically on Muslims because they have received marginal, if any attention, in sociological and psychological literature.

#### 9.2.1 HOMOPHOBIA/HETEROSEXISM

George Weinberg (1972) coined the term *homophobia* to describe the irrational fear of homosexuality and 'the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals' (Weinberg, 1972: 4). However, the term 'phobia' is problematic as it suggests that individual prejudice is based on irrational fears which, like other 'phobias' escapes moral responsibility or political critique (Herek 1991, 2000; Hopkins 1996). More importantly the term perpetuates the idea that there is something inherently wrong with homosexuals and they are responsible for evoking phobic reactions in heterosexuals (Neisen, 1990). Homophobia also carries negative connotations associated with the medical description of homosexuality, which considered it as a mental illness to be cured (Berrill & Herek, 1992). In relation to this research, rather than perceive the participants views as expressing homophobia, I propose that opposition to homosexuality has less to do with fear and more to do with what religious people perceive to be upholding moral or religious principles (Herek, 2004). In recognition of the problematic nature of the term 'homophobia' alternative terms have emerged. For Herek (1992) the term heterosexism is more appropriate, which is: 'an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community' (Herek, 1992: 89).

Heterosexism characterises heterosexuality as natural and superior to homosexuality and it is through this binary distinction that heterosexuals are privileged (Herek, 1992; Plummer, 1992). Privileges accorded to heterosexuals include political power, religious approval, moral status, the right and freedom to have or adopt children and raising families (Hopkins, 1996). Indeed, heterosexism is now the preferred term amongst researchers (Ellis & Mitchell, 2000). The suffix 'sexism' in heterosexism highlights the central role of gender in the hatred of homosexuals (Bohan, 1996). Herek (1992) bifurcates the term by distinguishing cultural heterosexism from psychological heterosexism. The former is expressed through a number of

---

<sup>1</sup> A social support group aimed as their objective states to 'support Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered. It is a supportive forum for discussing and exploring related religious, cultural and sexual identities'. It is the first of its kind in Britain, composed of mainly British/Pakistani Muslims.

societal institutions: religion, law, psychiatry, psychology and mass media, through which homosexuals are denied equal rights, and face stigmatisation and hostility. The latter is the individual expression of cultural heterosexism in action and attitude (prejudice). Due to the inappropriate usage of the term 'homophobia' to denote anti-homosexual attitudes and behaviours, other social scientists have embraced the term 'homonegativity' (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980). According to Herek, however (1984), the term homonegativity focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on negative attitudes. Although the purpose and basis of this chapter is to examine negative attitudes toward homosexuality, I feel that the concept of heterosexism allows for a deeper understanding of not only my participants negative views, but also the ideology behind those views (Islam/culture), and allows me to examine the issue of the superiority of heterosexuality over homosexuality. I examine the religious beliefs and ideas about gender as well as the view of homosexuality as deviant and sinful. In addition, I also look at how Islamic doctrine and Muslim scholars engender a heterosexist (both cultural and psychological) ideological system that denounces homosexual behaviour and therefore denies the homosexual a Muslim identity. I address these issues by paying attention to the views expressed by heterosexual Muslims.

### 9.3 PARTICIPANTS BACKGROUND

Using the responses from the three questions pertaining to the issue of homosexuality, I categorised heterosexual participants as against, for (accepting homosexuals and homosexual behaviour) or neutral (not supporting or opposing homosexuality). A number of factors were present in determining positive/negative attitudes towards homosexuality such as the age, gender, educational attainment and level of religiosity of the participant. At the centre of psychological research on homophobia, a primary focus is examining the demographic variables of individuals and how they affect their attitudes toward homosexuality/homosexuals. The age of the participant was not an influential factor in determining support or intolerance of homosexuality in my sample. Although previous research has found that heterosexual males tend to hold more hostile attitudes and feelings towards homosexuals than heterosexual females (Kite & Whitley, 1998; Sears, 1997; Herek, 1988) a rejection of homosexuality did not vary significantly according to gender. A substantial number of male (88%) and female participants (86%) believed that homosexuality was wrong, as we can see from Table 20:

Table 20: Views on Homosexuality According to the Gender of Participant			
Male		Female	
For	4 (12%)	For	3 (8%)
Against	29 (88%)	Against	30 (86%)
Neutral	-	Neutral	2 (6%)
Total	33	Total	35

According to Herek & Capitanio (1995), increased levels of education predict positive attitudes toward homosexuality. In my research, it was difficult to make any claims about the link between level of education and tolerance of homosexuality. This is primarily because my sample is highly skewed towards a more educated and professional group of people, for instance, 43% (14) of males had an undergraduate degree and 31% (11) of females. Moreover, 36% of my male participant had a postgraduate degree (including PhD) and 14% (including PhD) of females. However, as we can see from the Table 21, both male and female participants with a Bachelor's degree (35%) or less (40%: 'no formal education', 'school' and 'college') were just as likely to oppose homosexuality as those participants with a postgraduate degree (25%: 'Master's'/'PhD'):

Table 21: Level of Education of Participants Against Homosexuality							
Level of Education	No Formal Education	School	College	University [BA/BSc]	University [MA/MSc]	University [PhD]	Total
Total	1 (2%)	11 (19%)	11 (19%)	21 (35%)	11 (18%)	4 (7%)	59

On the other hand, those participants who accepted homosexual were also educated to a high level, as we can see from the Table 22:

Table 22: Level of Education of Participants Holding Neutral/For Homosexuality			
Sex	Name	For/Against	Educational Level
Male	Omar	For	University
'	Abid	For	PhD
'	Tariq	For	University (M.A.)
'	Farooq	For	University
Female	Sophia	For	University
'	Alison	For	University
'	Rukhsana	For	College
'	Farah	Neutral	College
'	Farzana	Neutral	School

Education, therefore, did not have an instrumental influence on participants' attitudes toward homosexuality. Yet, participants' levels of religiosity was directly associated with intolerance and opposition to homosexuality and was the most influential of all variables (e.g. age, education and gender). From the 46 male (24) and female (22) practising Muslims, all were in the 'against homosexuality' category. In addition, participants in the non-practising category similarly held negative views about homosexuality: 59% of males and females were against homosexuality with 32% (7) for and 9% (2) holding neutral views, as we can see from the Table below:

Table 23: Non-Practising Muslim Participants Views on Homosexuality	
For/Against/Neutral	Male
For	7 (32%)
Against	13 (59%)
Neutral	2 (9)
Total	22

### 9.3.1 ISLAM

According to Islam, humankind has been provided with a complete way of life in the form of scripture (Qur'an and *hadith*). The Qur'an, especially, is a transcendent and revelatory truth held by Muslims to be the infallible word of Allah. In order to understand participants' views and feelings towards homosexuality, we should first examine the Qur'an's position on homosexuality, which was used as a reference point by many practising Muslim participant. The subject is addressed in the Qur'an through verses relating to Prophet Lut:

We also (sent) Lut: He said to his people: "Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you?"  
 "For ye practise your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds".  
 And his people gave no answer but this: they said, "drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!".  
 But we saved him and his family, except his wife: she was of those who lagged behind.  
 And we rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): Then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime! (Qur'an, 7: 80-84)

To summarise, Prophet Lut (Lot in the Bible) was sent by Allah to warn the people against committing same-sex sexual acts, but because his relentless warnings were rejected, much of the population was eradicated (shower of brimstone). References to Prophet Lut appear in 14

chapters<sup>2</sup>. The frequency for Zafeeruddin (1996) indicates 'that this mischief is highly undesirable in Islam' (Zafeeruddin, 1996: 13). Muslim scholars generally understand this verse in the context of same-sex activity (sodomy) and as an unequivocal condemnation of homosexuality (Yahya, 2000; Zafeeruddin, 1996; Doi, 1984). Emanating from these verses is the belief that in Islam 'homosexuality is regarded as an aberration, as a violation of nature' (Duran, 1993: 183). Although the Qur'an is ambivalent about the precise punishment for homosexuality, from the last section of the verse (7:84) scholars infer that the death penalty should be imposed on those guilty of performing homosexual acts. The *hadith* is much more definitive about punishing acts of homosexuality (cf. Sofer, 1992). Several statements about same-sex acts are attributed to the Prophet. Among them are the following: 'the Prophet said: If you find anyone doing as Lut's people did, kill the one who does it, and the one to whom it is done'<sup>3</sup>, and again: 'If a man who is not married is seized committing sodomy, he will be stoned to death'<sup>4</sup>.

The *Shari'ah*, derived in part from *hadith*, also defines homosexuality as a crime. Amongst the four Sunni schools of Law, *Hanbali* is most severe in its recommendation for punishing acts of homosexuality: death by stoning, drawing on the Qur'an's reference. It is important at this juncture to state that although 'all Muslim jurists agree that sodomy is a sexual offence' they 'differ in their punishment' (Doi, 1984: 242). This indicates that in Islam, homosexuality is not a contentious issue, but an explicit sinful and criminal act (Duran, 1993) with punitive measures in place. Punishment for homosexuality is generally the same as the punishment laid down for adultery. Indeed, people who are married are punished more severely. According to the *Maliki* school, the *hadd*<sup>5</sup> punishment will be applied depending on the offender's marital status. This is because the person's behaviour has serious consequences with regard to their reputation and would in effect 'disrupt the family and the institution of marriage, both so important for the social order' (Schild, 1992: 182). According to the *Hanafi* school, because the act of sodomy (i.e. homosexuality) is not the same as adultery there is no prescribed punishment by *Hadd*.

Yet, nowhere in the Qur'an does it state explicitly or implicitly that death is the appropriate punishment for being homosexual. Indeed, in order to implement punishment, guilt must first

<sup>2</sup> Qur'an: 6: 85-87, 7: 78-82, 11:73, 11: 79-84, 15: 58-77, 21: 70-71, 21: 74-75, 22: 43-44, 26: 160-176, 27: 55-59, 29: 25, 29: 27-34, 37: 133-138, 38: 11-14, 50: 12-13, 54: 33-40 and 66: 10.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Dawud, Prescribed Punishments, Book 33: 4447

<sup>4</sup> Abu Dawud, Prescribed Punishments, Book 33: 4448

<sup>5</sup> *Hadd* (plural, *hudud*) is the punishment prescribed by God in the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*, 'the application of which is the right of God or *haqq Allah*' (El-Awa, 1982: 1). The six offences distinguished as offences of *hudud* are consumption of alcohol, theft and robbery, illicit sexual relations, slanderous accusation of unchastity and apostasy.

be established, and the *Shari'ah* requires incontestable evidence such as a confession or four reliable eyewitnesses verifying that they saw penetration (sodomy) take place (cf. Sofer, 1992; Schild, 1992). According to Vanita & Kidwai (2001) 'the difficulty of finding eyewitnesses to confirm instances of penetration in effect removes private acts between consenting individuals from the realm of punishment' (Vanita & Kidwai, 2001: 111). Homosexuality is condemned when it is publicised and therefore transgresses Islamic morals (Schild, 1992). Yet, there are increasingly differing views and interpretations of Islam's position toward homosexuality. Muslim scholars like Doi (1989) are conservative in their interpretation of homosexuality which leaves little room for 'a theological accommodation of homosexuals in Islam' (Duran 1993: 181), yet, Duran, a Moroccan social scientist, who has examined homosexuality as a human rights issue argues that 'the best hope for gays and lesbians in Muslim countries is to find some form of "theological accommodation" within Islam, based on the developed of a new Shari'a comparatively detached from the social climate of the seventh century Arabia' (Duran 1993: 181). While Jamal (2001) contends that the story of Lut involves a number of sins committed by the people of Lut, the Qur'an does not say that these people were destroyed for this specific sin. This has caused some scholars, like Jamal, to highlight the inhospitality of the people to the strangers. Moreover, Jamal (2001) states that it is the *hadith*, not the Qur'an which attributes the story of Lut exclusively to same-sex sexuality, therefore, shaping the interpretation of the Qur'an.

### 9.3.2 PARTICIPANTS' RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Previous studies have found that religiosity increases hatred towards homosexual's men and women compared to those people who indicate no religious preference (Bernstein, 2004; Herek, 1994). In my research, participants used religion to frame their understanding of sexual difference and homosexuality. The dominant traditional religious doctrine on homosexuality (discussed above) shapes the view of an overwhelming number of participants. References to the Qur'an and *hadith* as a source of their attitude on homosexuality were abundant. Condemnation of homosexuality was overwhelming, although disapproval varied from a simple statement that homosexuality was wrong, to advocating death as a punishment:

Within an Islamic context and personally speaking I think it's *haram*, it's unlawful for people to practice homosexual activity. (Khadija, Female 27)

On an Islamic point of view, I do feel that that's not the way, it's not right, it's not correct. (Nazneen, Female 34)



I will tell you of a *hadith* . . . the translation of it in English, is if you witness the homosexual parties kill both of them. This is my view. (Abbas, Male 52)

In Islam, if someone is a homosexual the ruling in *Shari'ah* is for that person to be executed (Yaseen, Male, 17)

Each view corresponds with the idea that homosexuality is wrong, sinful and unlawful and that religious doctrine suggests specific punishments for homosexual behaviour. Both Abbas and Yaseen were Iraqi, and both were informed by the *Hanbali* school (prevalent in Iraq), which advocates death for those caught committing acts of sodomy. All the above participants, except for Nazneen, were practising Muslims, so there appears to be a correlative association between religiosity and negative views about homosexuality. Although there are subtle differences in the participants' responses, there is a strong notion of psychological heterosexism, which is, as we recall, an individual expression of cultural heterosexism (religious condemnation). Indeed, participants believed that religion is culturally heterosexist in all aspects and that because of this, their condemnation of homosexuality is legitimate. It was noteworthy that other participants' comments were short and concise:

I think it's immoral, I think it's disgusting. (Aisha, Female 29)

That's haram! I don't agree with it at all. (Kamran, Male 29)

Oh my God! It's terrible. It's against *Shari'ah*. (Fatima, Female 44)

Disgusting. It's not right. (Basma, Female 15)

Sickening! (Ibrahim, Male 26)

It is a forbidden thing and I think it is disgusting and dangerous as well.  
(Saeed, Male 34)

Again, all but one participant (Kamran, Male 29) were practising Muslims from a variety of national backgrounds: Aisha (British); Kamran (Pakistani); Fatima and Basma (Iraqi) Ibrahim (British Pakistani) and Saeed (Moroccan). The short responses summed up in a few words their level of repulsion and disgust towards homosexuals. I also feel that these short statements indicated their unwillingness to discuss the matter any further. These participants did not feel that he/she had to elaborate in any detail: by characterising homosexuality as 'disgusting' 'sickening' and 'dangerous', they indicate that their views are rigid and non-

negotiable. Homosexual behaviour is also 'disgusting' because it symbolises in 'sexual terms the *revolt* against God. It is sinful because it violates the plan of God, present from creation, for the union of male and female in marriage' (Schmidt, 1995: 85). The hostility some participants felt towards homosexuality was framed using a religious discourse. For instance, Hanif, a GP comments: 'it's not my personal view, it is my religious view what is right and what is said in the Qur'an' (Hanif, Male 55). With this religious reasoning, they felt no shame or embarrassment: their understanding of the Qur'an and *hadith* permits them to condemn homosexual practices and relationships and justify their views without shame. Some participants offered possible remedies for the 'problem' which perpetuates the idea of homosexuality as an illness:

If he was . . . a friend [homosexual] I would speak to him as much as I can to persuade him to return to the normal path. If I have no authority on him I would just pray to Allah to give him guidance. (Abbas, Male 52)

If you feel that you have those feelings for the same sex it's more of a test . . . in an Islamic sense, what do you do? Do you go ahead with those feelings or do you curtail those actions. (Zainab, Female 20)

All conceived of homosexuality as a problem: while Zainab, a practising Muslim and convert, believed it to be as a test from Allah, Abbas, also a practising Muslim, felt that the 'problem' could be remedied through prayer. However, those grouped in the 'against' category generally demonstrated a complete lack of tolerance of homosexuality and in most cases (not all) based their beliefs on religion. Nevertheless, a few participants who were against homosexuality expressed slightly more tolerant views:

That's the individuals own prerogative what they do, but under Islam it's wrong and I believe it's wrong. (Muhsin, Male 36)

My view is that it's not normal but at the same time I'm willing to tolerate it, if somebody is a homosexual I don't care. (Rafiq, Male 48)

I think each to their own, but I don't approve of it. But I would never impose my views on somebody else. (Alma, Female 21)

Although these responses demonstrate a degree of tolerance of homosexuality, their comments were followed with a statement which indicates the unwillingness to approve of homosexuality. Acceptance is curtailed by the belief that the Qur'an renounces and

disapproves of homosexuality. Their statements continue to reflect a degree heterosexism. In the following extract, Humaira (Female, 29), a married mother of one, offers a different perspective:

I do believe in Islam that it's wrong. At the same time, I don't believe we have the right to turn our back on someone who is homosexual and make judgement either. I remember we were at a young Muslim camp, and there was a guy there doing the talk, I think he was from Manchester, because Manchester has got quite a large gay community. He was saying that he had spent time there and all these people were going on about these gays do *haram*, and everybody judged them and stood back and called them everything under the sun, and he said what right do we have, we have to go in there and we have to talk to them and let them be able to approach us.

Humaira indicates, unlike other participants, that it is possible to be compassionate but at the same time not condone homosexuality. This position does not undermine her view that Islam regards homosexuality as wrong, this is not open to debate. She employs this argument of understanding and compassion not to accept the homosexual way of life, but as a possible method for homosexual people to overcome their homosexual desires. Even amongst non-practising Muslims, there was general opposition of homosexuality. For Katherine, a convert who was married to a Kuwaiti Muslim, her 'new' religious views on homosexuality endorsed her personal view: 'I always felt this way, and when I started reading the Qur'an I became more against it [homosexuality]'. Other non-practising participants who were opposed to homosexuality did not refer to religion as a reference point to validate their feelings of antipathy against homosexuality. Rather, they referred to the idea that homosexuality was 'against nature':

Homosexuality is immoral. Without religion, it's against the rules of nature. (Aisha, Female 29)

Participant: I don't like it. I don't think it's something which is very natural.

Interviewer: Is this a religious or cultural belief?

Participant: It's just a social belief nothing to do with religion or culture. (Tahir, Male 40)

This indicates that the hatred of homosexuality is implicitly linked with important aspects of a participant's belief system, their upbringing and their understanding of gender roles. The discourse of nature affects and influences their antipathy and hostility towards homosexuality. Through the socialisation process, heterosexist feelings are affirmed and reflected in the

behaviour and beliefs of their parents and peers. For example, Ahmed, Hameed and Kamran (all non-practising) were all born and raised in Muslim countries (Kuwait, Iraq and Pakistan), where the culture and environment does not permit or recognise homosexuality socially or legally. Indeed, in these countries, homosexuality is condemned in the criminal code or is taboo (cf. Sofer, 1992). Heterosexism is therefore legally sanctioned and pervades all aspects of social life, including the culture, religion and the penal code. However, not all participants opposed or rejected homosexuality, some believed it was neither a sin nor a perversion. A number of participants (32%) who did accept homosexuality were non-practising:

I don't have a problem with it, not at all. (Abid, Male 38)

Not bothered about it. I think homosexuality is a variation of human nature, which is like perhaps being white, brown, yellow or whatever. (Omar, Male 37)

I don't have one [opinion], each to their own. (Rukhsana, Female 33)

These participants accepted and tolerated homosexuality. So, people who do not use religion to frame their daily life, were more likely to avoid blanket condemnations of homosexuality. All the above participants were born and bred in Scotland and, given their non-religious perspective, were more accepting of homosexual relationships and lifestyles.

#### 9.4 SEXUALITY IN ISLAM

It is important to consider what the Qur'an says about sexuality and sexual roles. Men and women in the Qur'an have been made distinct by 'nature' and the idea of a biological order, natural ability, maleness and femaleness are intrinsic in religious doctrine (Nicolaisen 1983). The basis for these ideas is demonstrated by gender segregation in Muslim societies. Thus, we see a distinct separation of the sexes in Islam (Gerholm, 2003), men and women have been divided in their dependence on one another (Dahl, 1997). The separation of the sexes is maintained on religious grounds given that both premarital and extramarital relations are prohibited. Thus, although the pleasure of sexuality are celebrated for both sexes, sexual urges, if unrestrained, may misguide and jeopardise the social order, therefore, it is important for sexuality to be organised (Dahl, 1997). Indeed, Allah has created pairs (Qur'an 51:49): male and female, and with the exception of those who are physically or financially unable to get married, marriage is obligatory for all Muslims. Marriage impacts the lives of Muslims in a number of ways it preserves one's chastity (Esposito, 1991). It leads to the development and strength of the family, legitimates intercourse and allows for the reproduction of children

(Esposito, 1991). In fact, the word for wedding, *nikah*, is also the word for intercourse' (Gerholm, 2003: 405). All other sexuality is illegitimate (*zina*). *Zina* is the antithesis of *nikah* (Bouhdiba, 1988). Lifestyle patterns such as bachelorhood and celibacy are strongly discouraged (cf. Gerholm, 2003). There are attached social obligations in marriage for Muslims, these include rights and duties in relation to personal, family and community life (Bouhdiba, 1998). Homosexuality according to Qaradawi is contrary to the regulation of the sexual drive in Islam, thus homosexuality is a:

Perverted act . . . a reversal of the natural order, a corruption of man's sexuality, and a crime against the rights of females (The same applies equally to the case of lesbianism)<sup>6</sup>.

The essential cultural values amongst Muslims are inter-dependence and inter-connectedness not the Independence and individuality that typify western society (Yip, 2004). Writers like Bouhdiba (1998) promote a view of Islam as essentially and exclusively heterosexual. What comes across from his work is that it is inconceivable that homosexuality could be thought of as a form of sexual selfhood, given the importance of marriage, children and family in Islam.

#### 9.4.1 DISCOURSE OF COMPLEMENTARITY

The Qur'an promotes heterosexuality as normal and this recognition permeates the entire way of life prescribed for Muslims. This is seen in the general principles of marriage, inheritance, segregation of 'spaces' and property rights. Heterosexuality is the *only* sexual identity for males and females while homosexual is differentiated (only) in condemnation:

The sexual matching of male and female, which Islamic tradition has always seen as rooted in God's ordering of the world he made, is embodied (literally) in the respective anatomies of man and woman. Homosexuality is condemned as a transgression against the will of God. It is seen as threatening the human race with extinction, God created humanity not in a playful mood, but to worship God. Homosexuality goes against this very purpose (Duran, 1993: 182-183).

The dominant Muslim scholarly interpretation is that heterosexuality is natural; as 'a moral category *natural* refers to something that is in accord with God's intention' (Schmidt, 1995: 133), enforced through marriage, family, and social norms. Indeed, participants, even those who were non-practicing, refused to conceive of homosexuality as morally equivalent to

---

<sup>6</sup> The Middle East Quarterly: The Qaradawi Fatwas: [<http://www.meforum.org/article/646>]

heterosexuality because the former is contrary to natural law (union and procreation) and does not create new life, it impedes procreation:

No, [they are not equal] first of all they can't reproduce not in a normal way obviously they can get round it but not in a normal way in a normal heterosexual relationship. I just think it's *haram* that part of the body is not made for that thing. It's made to get rid of waste which is why the man and woman relationship completely complements, cause that part of the woman's body is made for that, for childbirth. I just think when two men come together it's unnatural. (Uzma, Female 33)

For Uzma, male homosexual activity (sodomy) is perceived as a misuse of male sexual faculty. She uses reproduction to emphasise how male same-sex activity is contrary to Allah's law for human life and the perpetuation of the human race because it 'violates the order of the world' (Schild, 1992). In this doctrine:

Only heterosexual sex is directed to the 'other half' of this dualism and unites the two sexes in a 'whole.' Homosexual sex is, therefore, 'incomplete,' directed toward one's own 'half,' rather than the other 'half.' (Ruether, 1994: 389)

Homosexuality involves the perversion of human sexual faculty/capacity as it is in adultery where one's sexuality is being misused. The discourse of complementarity was used to highlight the superiority of heterosexual relationships. The verse on 'created in pairs' supports the Qur'anic teaching in the way Muslims form their sexual relationship:

Allah says: We have created you pairs, and created everything in the earth as pairs and the natural intimation is in my view is to have a heterosexual relationship. (Sadla, Female 36)

Opposition to homosexuality (precluded from this pairing) was usually discussed in relation to marriage and childbearing. Response to the second question (do you think homosexual relationships are as equal as heterosexual relationships?) characterises and situates same-sex relationships as an incomplete way of expressing sexuality. Nauman a non-practising Muslim and married with three children, comments:

I don't think they're as equal because I don't think they have the potential of heterosexual relationships have in terms of having children together. I think that means people in heterosexual relationships can move on to a different level of a relationship. I think homosexual relationships in that sense are

incomplete because you will never have that ability to have children that you have produced biologically to rear and bring up. (Nauman, Male 36)

Having children develops the heterosexual relationship and because homosexuals are unable to biologically conceive, their relationship impedes personal and emotional development. In the next quotation, gender roles are used to delineate the parameters of sexuality:

I believe that a man and a woman in a relationship are equal partners, yet their standing or role in the relationship is different what they bring to the relationship is differing qualities. Men and women are intrinsically different. Same sex couples, I believe, are incomplete and lacking normality. (Azhar, Male 23)

There is a gendering of reality, a creation of male and female spaces and a separation of maleness from femaleness, and these aspects are essential in the organisation of sexuality. Yet, homosexuals in their partnerships challenge this and when they choose to 'imitate' the heterosexual family unit, they are met with ridicule and scrutiny:

You know homosexuals want to adopt children . . . you think well if you wanted to have your own children there are ways of having them and this is not one of them! It's kind of hypocritical in a way. Also I think it's unfair on the child to be brought up in an odd way, without being sexist or anything the child does need a father and a mother . . . but to put a child in an unusual situation . . . (Saira, Female 34)

According to Saira, a non-practising mother of two, the only way to have children is through a heterosexual relationship. Homosexuals who choose to have children disrupt the sanctity and 'normalcy' of heterosexual parenthood. The possible method homosexual females would use for conceiving a child for Nafisa was regarded as un-Islamic and unlawful.

If you're using sperm . . . if you're two females wanting a child that's wrong in the first place, religion doesn't give you the permission to do that, without getting married you shouldn't have those kinds of relationships, in our religion that's adultery. (Nafisa, Female 37)

Heterosexuality is therefore central to parenting:

Not one of them is a mother, not one of them is a father, and it's quite confusing for a child. At least when you have two parents you know one of them is a female and one of them is a male. At least in a marriage you both

know that yeah we're married and if we fall pregnant then *Al-Hamdu'lillah* it's by the will of Allah. (Samra, Female 25)

This privilege of having children naturally is not accorded to homosexual couples and the way homosexuals become parents is through artificial means. What this also means is that homosexuals cross the boundaries of gender role expectations because heterosexual parenting recognises the male as the father (masculine) and the female as the mother (feminine). While Nafisa (Female, 37), questions the religious legitimacy of conception through sperm donation for lesbian couples, Saira and Samra, challenge the capacity of homosexuals to parent effectively. These women also believe that the child will be harmed psychologically, because he/she would not receive a proper (gender) perspective with parents of the same sex. In short, there is no frame of reference to understand homosexuality except that which condemns the practice and punishes it when made public. Other participants refused to acknowledge any kind of homosexual behaviour:

I will not condone homosexuality whether they are "married" or living together it is a sin, whatever form it is in. (Kausar, Female 49)

Nevertheless, there were some participants who accepted homosexuality and respected homosexual relationships. For these participants, there was a positive characterisation of the behaviour and value of the homosexual person. Yet, it is noteworthy, that all three men were non-practising Muslims and were born and raised in Scotland:

Although they are the same sex there is no difference they are both humans, they are both capable of being nice to each other or being nasty to each other I don't see there being any real difference. (Abid, Male 38)

[Homosexuals are] equal but different, I believe they should be treated equally by law, take Holland where I believe homosexual couples are allowed to get married. I believe they are equal in that sense, I would treat that as equal to a couple who were married. Whereas conventionally where they live with each I would treat it on par with a heterosexual couple who were just living together as well, where they have made a formal commitment then I would treat it as a heterosexual relationship where people have made a formal commitment as well. (Tariq, Male 40)

I have an open mind about it, if I think people are not deliberately harming other people and their happy in a relationship with another man or a woman then I think we should just let them get on with it. (Farooq, Male 40)



Participants who accepted homosexuality, defined and characterised homosexual relationships as being just as loving, caring and committed as heterosexual relationships. In the absence of a religious framework, the argument about the unnaturalness of same-sex relationships is insignificant. Farooq, for example expresses a non-intrusive attitude: sexuality is a private matter which falls outside of the realm of religious regulation.

#### 9.5 ATTITUDES TOWARDS MUSLIM HOMOSEXUALS

In spite of the general prohibition of homosexuality in the Qur'an and *hadith*, there are people who identify themselves as homosexual and Muslim. The emergence of Al-Fatiha (a social support group for homosexual Muslims) has prompted a debate about the role of homosexuality in Islam in the 'West'. Some participants were aware of the existence of openly homosexual Muslims:

I don't think that is right, once you are homosexual you are not Muslim because Islam clearly states that homosexuality is *haram*. If you are a homosexual you are not a Muslim. (Bilal, Male 28)

Homosexuality doesn't come into it at all, I don't see that as a viable way of life. Nothing the Prophet did or say was anything but divine revelation, even his utterances are divinely inspired so if that was a consent way of life we would've had through the *Seerah* at least somebody doing it and him not frowning upon it so that's my understanding of it. (Haider, Male 32)

Both Bilal and Haider (practising Muslims) believe that the Qur'an and *hadith* prohibits homosexuality and considers it as unlawful: by default those committing unlawful acts (homosexual) have no right to identify as being Muslim:

From an Islamic point of view these are the people who are corrupting Islamic principles, how can you get a Muslim gay association? It's become the norm thinking – it's not the norm in my opinion it's just the *shaytan* [devil], this is the devil at work, you cannot get two men and two women why? Because it's just so unnatural. (Waqas, Male 24)

By likening homosexuals to the devil, Waqas, a married father of two, situates homosexuals in the realm of sin and transgression and homosexuals as acting in rebellion against Allah. Therefore, the claim by homosexuals that they are entitled to their identity as Muslims is illegitimate. By merely expressing and affirming their sexuality, homosexuals represent a challenge to the very basic assumption about what it means to be male, and they upset

traditional definitions of masculinity. What this also indicates is that the privilege of masculinity does not extend to all males in society equally, there are clear distinctions.

## 9.6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to examine heterosexual participant's views and attitudes towards homosexuality; how they constructed their ideas; and how they justified these views. Heterosexual participants expressed homonegative and heterosexist views. They did not perceive being homosexual as a legitimate social, personal or religious identity. Moreover, for a significant number of participants, homosexuals were 'defined solely in terms of their sexuality' (Berrill & Herek, 1992: 94). Participants did not differentiate 'between the value of homosexual persons and the value of homosexual behaviour'. For a large number of heterosexual male and female participants (86% were against homosexuality), views about homosexuals ranged from outright disgust, a sense of unnaturalness about their sexual behaviour and relationships, to moderate attitudes tolerating and accepting homosexuals. However, toleration was qualified, because it was preceded by comments about homosexuality being wrong, unnatural and contrary to religion. Heterosexual participants' views were protected, legitimate and correct because it was a set of ideas dictated by their religion. Indeed, religiosity was seen to be a factor in the negative views on homosexual, since a large number of participants who were against homosexuals were practising Muslim.

Homonegativity and heterosexism were intimately interwoven with basic, important aspects of the participants' belief system and cultural upbringing. In essence, accepting homosexuality is inconsistent with the dominant gender ideal in the Qur'an: it disrupts the essential idea of what it means to be a man and woman (marriage, fatherhood/motherhood). Homosexuality subverts the sexual and gender norms, which are: 'heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive, non-commercial, coupled, relational, same generational, and private' (Berrill and Herek, 1992: 96). Indeed, participants opposing homosexuality assert the legitimacy and righteousness of heterosexuality through marriage and family. The inability of homosexuals to procreate was further used to reinforce social, religious and cultural norms which continue to suppress homosexuals from emerging and legitimating their claim to a religious identity. Homosexuality is unregulated and bound by no institutional or religious discourse. However, some (non-practising) participants did not use Islam to construct their ideas about homosexuality; rather they offered a more liberal and open view regarding non-heterosexual relationships, one that respected both the homosexual person and their right and freedom to

form relationships. Nevertheless, there were non-practising Muslims who were just as critical of homosexuality as their practising counterparts. In the next chapter, I discuss the lives of homosexual Muslims in Britain, and how their sexuality shapes their perspective on gender and Islam. How does their sexuality challenge prevailing gender norms within Islam?

## CHAPTER TEN

### ON BEING HOMOSEXUAL AND MUSLIM: CONFLICTS & CHALLENGES

#### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the undeniable contribution of contemporary sociological and historical works on homosexuality, the impact of religion on the identity of homosexuals has been dealt almost exclusively within Christianity (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Yip, 1997; Comstock, 1996, 1993; Thumma, 1991) and more recently within Judaism (Shneer & Aviv 2002; Balka & Rose 1991). What is notably absent from the vast array of work on homosexuality and religion is the experience of Muslim homosexuals. This is exacerbated by the fact that 'data regarding gay men of colour remain sparse for reasons having to do with the complex interactions of racism with homophobia and heterosexism' (Brown cited in McLean et al., 2003: 13). Given this and the paucity of material on this topic my research is an attempt to begin to fill this gap. This section examines how some homosexual men combine incongruent identities (Rodriguez & Ouellette 2000, Yip 1997; Thumma 1991): homosexual and Muslim, and how they integrate these identities into their concept of self. The term sexuality generally refers to the properties that differentiate human beings on the basis of their reproductive roles. 'Sexualities' refers to the multiple forms sexuality can take: heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and so on. Homosexual orientation involves an emotional and sexual inclination to someone of the same sex or gender. The history of homosexuality demonstrates the shift in definitions and understanding of what it means to be homosexual.

#### 10.2 HISTORY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

According to Weeks (1991) the history of homosexuality is distinguishable by three particular phases. The first, demonstrated in the work of early sexologists, sought to establish the trans-historical existence and value of homosexuality as a distinctive existence and sexual experience. Historical evidence highlights the late nineteenth century as the critical period in the conceptualisation of homosexuality as the distinct characteristic of a particular type of person, the 'invert' or 'homosexual'. Foucault (1978) conceived of homosexuality as a construction of the medical profession to classify the sexual behaviour of some people. In England, for example, it was only in the nineteenth century that the medical profession categorised homosexuality as an identity category, thus creating the designation of homosexuality (Foucault, 1978). Indeed, the term was created in 1869 and only used in English in the 1880s and 1890s as a result of the work of Ellis [who is Ellis?] (Weeks, 1991:

16). The crux of Foucault's argument was that sexuality is immersed in power relations:

Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check . . . It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power. (Foucault, 1990: 105-106).

Power is central to Foucault's analysis of sexuality. It is rooted in all relations where differences exist and involves the construction of divisions between the dominant and dominated. Foucault argued that the construction of homosexuality transpired when the medical profession defined it as a mental illness. Foucault explored the creation of homosexuality through the 'specification of individuals' (Foucault, 1978: 42). This created a new sexuality which was based on perverse acts and behaviour which had hitherto been regarded as 'temporary aberrations'. Central to this were the 'new sciences' of medicine, sexology and psychiatry that classified homosexuality as a malady and used this classification as a method to confine and treat homosexuals. Sexologists like Krafft-Ebing, Ellis, Hirschfeld and Freud sought to medically and psychologically identify new sexual classifications (Weeks, 1991: 16), such as homosexuality, nymphomania and so on (Bristow, 1997). This phase was dominated by a view that homosexuality was problematic and that sexual normality was exclusively in terms of relations with the opposite sex demarcating legitimate and illegitimate human relationships. Foucault's focus on the historical study of sexuality emphasised the influence of social, political and religious practices and discourses which affected sexuality through the laying out of sexual parameters, development of particular sexual relationships (heterosexual) and constraining others (homosexuality).

In the second phase identified by Weeks (1991), the reformist activities of the 1950s and 1960s were central. The work generated by the likes of Kinsey and Hooker created the idea that homosexuality was 'a distinct social experience, the task was to deal with it', therefore there was a move towards understanding the generality of the homosexual experience in history (Weeks, 1991: 12). Coinciding with the second, the third phase was more vocalised and came as a result of the radical gay movement in the late 1960s and 1970s in North America and Europe. Here the importance lay in affirming 'the values of a lost experience, stressing the positive value of homosexuality and locating the sources of its social oppression'

(Weeks, 1991: 13). The gradual 'acceptance' was the result of their continual struggle for equality and rights by the Gay Liberation movement (GLF). The GLF in the UK emerged in the 1970s and worked to change the way homosexuals perceived themselves and their sexual relationships which, they argued, were just as healthy and natural as heterosexual relationships (Spencer, 1996). What was also evident was a reconfiguration of identity: the term 'gay' was adopted as part of a self-description for homosexuals in the 1970s and was largely the result of political struggles (Weeks, 1991). It embodied a declaration of a self-determining cultural identity away from the medical or legal view of sexuality.

### 10.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality in the 'West' is a term which is not defined by sexual behaviour alone, but also involves desire and identity. Thus, one must be sexually and emotionally inclined to desire a person of the same gender. While 'identity' involves the commitment to identify being homosexual as a distinctive aspect of one's personality, the idea that everyone who engages in homosexual behaviour is 'a homosexual' does not explain the experience of those men who engage in sexual acts with other men nor of those who are married yet have clandestine affairs with men. Therefore, not everyone who exhibits same-sex behaviour is defined as a homosexual either by themselves or by others (Murray, 1984, cited in Roscoe & Murray, 1993). In Britain, the diffusion of a 'homosexual' identity involving partners who both identify as being 'gay' is a relatively recent development. Contemporary Western homosexual identity represents a singular configuration of identity, lifestyle, and group formation (Roscoe & Murray, 1993: 6-7). For Seabrook (1999), the 'Western' conceptualisation of homosexuality is incompatible with other cultures, that is, the terms 'homosexual' or 'gay' generate different meanings in different societies. He studied men who have sex with men in India. He argues that we must avoid transferring 'Western' preconceptions to other cultures:

In many cultures in Asia and Africa – concepts of being gay, or bi-sexual are not applicable to such relationships . . . It is very easy for the West, with its dominance of the cultural as well as the economic arena, to reinterpret the whole arena, to reinterpret the whole world in its own image and on its own terms (Seabrook, 1999: 1-2).

In relation to my participants, there are several critical factors including religion, ethnicity, race which are important for understanding the experience Muslim homosexuals. My participants are different from White homosexual men in multiple and complex ways because of the differences between interpretations of gender and religion within British society and the

mainstream Muslim 'community'. Homosexual Muslims face discrimination not only at the hands of the mainstream Muslim 'community' but also by the wider indigenous homosexual 'community'. In the following quotation, Ratti (1993) comments demonstrate the difference between South Asian and White 'Western' homosexuals in America:

The neglectful way that the mainstream gay and lesbian communities have treated people of color within their parameters must also be considered. The subculture does not acknowledge that South Asians and other ethnically distinct groups have a different life experience, difference societal and familial influences, and different needs; too often we are expected to fit into a generic gay and lesbian mold that is a square hole for our round pegs' (Ratti, 1993: 14).

How far then, can my participants' conceptions of sexuality come to resemble conventional British conceptions? Given that two out of the seven men were from Africa (Omar & Jamal) and one from Pakistan (Sohail), the experiences of these men are disparate from their British counterparts. Moreover, despite having been born and bred in Britain, the remaining four men (Adil, Kashif, Nazir & Imtiyaz) were carving out a 'gay space' within the British Muslim community through Al-Fatiha. It was clear that a self-identification as being homosexual and British and their struggles as Muslims created the need to base politics in relation to their sense of being homosexual. As Ratti (1993) remarks:

The benefits of coming together have been tremendous, yet we gay and lesbian South Asians still continue to be an invisible group. We are relatively unknown in the gay and lesbian communities, and we are similarly overlooked in the mainstream South Asian communities. Whether because of benign neglect or a conscious desire to deny our existence, evidenced by myriad rationales, we too often go unacknowledged in both groups (Ratti, 1993: 13).

Thus, for my participants, the discrimination that they face both by the White British public and mainstream Muslims fuels their desire to be involved in creating their own space, where they are able to negotiate and create their own identities. The politics of sexual identity allows them to determine or negotiate a common ground where they might construct visible and active communities. Expressing homosexual desire, engaging in homosexual relationships and joining networks of those similarly inclined is in some ways distinct but in others similar.

#### 10.4 PARTICIPANTS BACKGROUND

To give 'voice' to the participants, this part of the chapter draws heavily upon the narratives gained from interviews with seven male homosexual Muslims to examine their understanding of their sexuality, Islam and gender. Although I endeavoured to include lesbian Muslims, I was unable to locate or secure interviews with an adequate number of women. During my trip to London (where the fieldwork was conducted), I spoke to only three lesbians. From the three women I initially contacted, I interviewed only one. One cancelled the interview due to a personal problem, the other lived outside of London which made interviewing. I felt that a single interview was inadequate as it would not provide a proper exploration of the lives of lesbian Muslim lesbian. A slightly bigger sample of lesbians would be required to draw a meaningful examination of their lives and the intersection between religion and sexuality. The purpose of the interviews with male homosexual Muslims was to address the issue concerning the lives of Muslim homosexuals. I also wanted to examine how they defined masculine roles and challenged the heteronormative gender model found in Islam to 'situate' themselves. The participants in my sample were all Muslims (one *Shia* and the remaining six *Sunn*), aged between 25 and 40 years old (median age 31.7). Five out of the seven men were from a Pakistani ethnic background, while the remaining two were of an African background. Educational level was also high. As we can see from Table 24:

Table 24: Homosexual Participants Demographic Information				
Name	Age	Ethnic Background	Level of Education	Occupation
Omar	35	Kenyan	M.A. Degree	Therapist
Sohail	29	Pakistani	B.A. Degree	Theatre Designer
Adil	25	Pakistani	B.A. Degree	PhD Student
Imtiyaz	35	Pakistani	School	Train Driver
Kashif	30	Pakistani	B.A. Degree	Pharmacist
Jamal	28	Somalian	B.A. Degree	Director of a HIV Support Org.
Nasir	40	Pakistani	B.A. Degree	Gay Men's Development Worker

Although all the men identified as being homosexual there were different degrees of openness regarding their sexuality, as we can see from Table 25:



Table 25: Degree of Openness and Relationship Status			
Name	Age	Open About Being Homosexual (With Friends, Family & At Work)	Relationship Status
Omar	35	Yes	Long Term Relationship
Sohail	29	Not With Family	Single
Adil	25	Not With Family	Single
Imtiyaz	35	Yes	Long Term Relationship
Kashif	30	Yes	Long Term/Open Relationship
Jamal	28	Yes	Single
Nasir	40	Yes	Single

The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting and audio taped with the permission of the participants. My interview schedule with homosexual participants consisted of 24 questions and was divided into sections headed: Islam, Family, Gender Roles, Identity, Masculinity/Femininity, Sexuality and Relationships (See Appendix B). The themed sections guided the interviews so that the information obtained from each participant was to some extent regulated, yet still allowing me to explore individual differences. Prior to each interview, a questionnaire was handed to the participants to fill out requesting quantitative details (age, occupation, education, relationship status and so on.). The completed questionnaire was designed to ascertain the importance of Islam in their life (do you pray/fast, give to charity) (See Appendix D). I assured them of confidentiality due to the sensitive nature of the study. All participants have been given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

One may question the degree to which my identity as a heterosexual female Muslim influenced participants. Interestingly, my identity was not wholly disadvantageous. I was particularly welcomed by members of the support group Al-Fatiha because they were grateful that I, as a heterosexual Muslim was interested in an issue that continues to be taboo in mainstream Muslim communities. I was told repeatedly by the co-ordinator of Al-Fatiha 'at least you are willing to hear us out'. Indeed, I had not anticipated such high levels of openness, and there was little, if any, inhibition on the part of the participants. Thus, my religious background if anything contributed to their forthcoming attitude, as they were eager to initiate a discussion with the mainstream Muslim 'community', and I represented for them a bridge to begin that discussion. In addition, the fact that several participants and I were bilingual in the same language (six of the participants spoke either Urdu or Punjabi) and shared the same ethnic background (Pakistani) heightened a sense of connection. This was significantly important as Sweasy (1997) explains that 'as a white observer I stand very much outside these, (ethnic, cultural and racial issues) and perhaps not be able to do justice to their specific complexities'

(Sweasy, 1997: XII). Therefore, I believe that as a Pakistani, British born female and Muslim I was able to 'do justice' to the complex nature of my participants sexual, religious and social lives.

#### 10.4.1 THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE PARTICIPANT'S LIFE

Although 'Islam forbids homosexual practices (sexual relations between two men or between two women), regarding them a great sin' (Hewitt, 1997: 29), the male participants in this research are testament to the fact that despite facing religious and social condemnation, they affirm their homosexual orientation and Muslim identity. Indeed, homosexual Muslims who until recently have been confined to a 'culture of invisibility' are now speaking out in their endeavour to both re-claim their Muslim identity and reconcile their faith with their sexuality. I typically began each interview with set questions on the importance of religion in the participants' lives. The Qur'an is 'very explicit in its condemnation, leaving scarcely any loophole for a theological accommodation of homosexuals in Islam' (Duran, 1993: 181). Despite this, I wanted to explore how the men in my sample shaped their identity as Muslims and how religion impacted on their sense of self. The consequence of such a belief system has led 'many gay men and lesbians [to] repudiate organised religion or at least maintain a healthy distance in order to survive in a hostile context' (Ellison, 1993: 149).

Despite this, the participants placed a considerable importance on their faith. Kashif described the role that Islam plays in his life: 'being a Muslim means worshipping Allah and leading a decent honest life. I try to be as human as possible from an Islamic point of view'. While Omar (35), who was originally from Kenya, stated that: 'Islamic values in themselves are a way of life to me that ultimately reflects on me as a person and how I relate to society and in my thinking'. Nasir and Adil, who were non-practising, stated they never prayed, the remaining five prayed either once a week or once a month. Although five of the participants considered themselves to be practising Muslims, their actual religious practice varied. The five practising men fasted in the month of Ramadan and gave to charity, they also considered Islam to be important to their lifestyle. We can see this in Table 26 & 27:

Table 26: Level of Religiosity of Homosexual Participants				
Name	Practising/Non Practising Muslim	How Often Do You Pray	How Often Do You Visit the Mosque	How Often Do You Read the Qur'an
Omar	Practising	Once a Week	Once a Week	Sometimes
Sohail	Practising	Once a Week	On Special Occasions	Rarely
Adil	Non Practising	Never	Rarely	Rarely
Imtiyaz	Practising	Once a Week	Once a Week	Sometimes
Kashif	Practising	Once a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month
Jamal	Practising	Once a Month	Once a Week	Once a Day
Nasir	Non Practising	Never	Never	Never

Table 27: Level of Religious Practice of Homosexual Participants					
Name	Do You Fast	Have You Done Hajj	Have you Done Umrah	Do You Give Zakat	Do You Give Sadaqa
Omar	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sohail	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Adil	No	No	No	N/A	No
Imtiyaz	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Kashif	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jamal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nasir	No	No	No	No	No

Nasir (40) declared that he was a non-practising Muslim because 'the teachings of the Qur'an represent little importance for me in my life' adding that 'I'm a cultural Muslim'. Although he admitted he used to pray, fast and celebrate Eid in the past, he no longer continued any of these practices. The determining factor which had influenced his decision was a belief in the religious condemnation of homosexuality. As an openly gay man, he firmly believed that in avowing his sexual identity he would have to negate his identity as a Muslim. Nevertheless, for Nasir, this was by no means detrimental to him. The impression he gave was one of being liberated by feelings of no longer being bound by religious doctrine. For Adil (25), who lived on his own, the situation was far more complex. Not only was the issue of religion and sexuality a source of conflict he felt his belief in science contradicted his 'religious' beliefs:

I think I have come full circle again, back to non-orthodox, more humanistic and rationalist beliefs. I attempted to try the religion thing again and it hasn't worked. The scientist in me, which is very strong and fervent, can't accept the current religious view of God. Nor the Islamic injunction against

homosexuality which is irrational! Maybe I am just holding onto something which is effectively dead in my character and identity now, maybe I should let it go completely and simply be a 'shell' of a Muslim for familial purposes. (Adil, 25)

Jamal (28), a Somalian, equally felt uncomfortable about his faith's denunciation of homosexuality: 'I feel upset about reading what the Qur'an and the *ahadith* have to say about homosexuality. Anybody who has knowledge of the Qur'an knows that homosexuality is wrong. It's quite clear'. He dealt with the issue by separating the two identities. He demonstrated this to me by depicting faith in one clenched fist and sexuality in the other. He stressed that his homosexual feelings were too strong and overpowering for him to suppress and so was unable to renounce or reject his gay self. Jamal appeared to have reached a compromise by separating rather than bridging his two identities, in this way he neither renounced nor rejected his gay self. Rodriguez & Ouellette (2000) explain:

By keeping two conflicting identities separate, conflict resolution, or identity consonance, is achieved. Compartmentalization . . . requires that the two spheres be kept rigidly in order to avoid conflicting prescriptions for behaviour. Gays and lesbians can use this strategy by keeping their religion out of the homosexual parts of their lives, and keeping their homosexuality out of their religious lives. However, only, by completely isolating one's homosexual identity from one's religious identity can this strategy for reducing identity conflict be successful. If the barriers between the two identities are breached, a slide back to identity dissonance could result. (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000: 334)

For Jamal, when the 'barriers between the two identities are breached there is a painful reminder of his faith's rejection of him as a homosexual man. This was apparent in his awkwardness during the interview. He was not reflective about discussing his sexuality because by talking about his faith and sexuality he had to bridge the gap he had created between them. Adil expanded on the theme of conflict: 'I find it very difficult to couple the two [Islam and homosexuality] together. The two are still quite exclusively at war, mutually destructive I think is the word or mutually conflicting at least in my mind it's very conflicting'. For Nasir, Adil and Jamal there are 'problems of being 'doubly other', belonging to two minorities . . . because these two identities are simply not supposed to exist in the same person – they should cancel each other out' (Sweasy, 1997: 5). Nasir and Adil in particular chose not to adhere to the religion because religion presents a theologically sanctioned system of authority which is a source of condemnation and stigma of their lifestyle. The social order prescribes a set of identities, roles, relationships and social ties for heterosexuals. Those out-

with the confined heterosexual boundary are considered to be defying the social norms of society and thus deviant. Such a view is corroborated from an Islamic perspective. Bouhdiba (1998) draws our attention to this issue:

Islam remains violently hostile to all other ways of realising sexual desire, which are regarded as unnatural purely and simply because they run counter to the antithetical harmony of the sexes; they violate the harmony of life . . . homosexuality is a challenge to the order of the world as laid down by God and based upon the harmony . . . of the sexes. (Bouhdiba, 1998: 31-32).

Heterosexual relations are assigned a moral, spiritual and social value, affirming and constituting heterosexual sex as procreative and harmonious. The impact of such condemnation was in the participants' struggle to come to terms with their attraction to men. Indeed, this issue was a source of tremendous guilt and conflict. Reflecting on this, Kashif (30) explains: 'I used to pray to God a lot to give me the understanding of why He has made me this way, if I'm not meant to be this way, then make me straight'. Similarly, Sohail (29), a Pakistani who had been living in London for 7 years, stated that 'individually I used to feel inferior to myself, socially and emotionally I wanted God to make me straight'. Imtiyaz (35), a working class British born Pakistani, hoped that he 'would change, because I always thought there was something wrong with me. I thought back to myself as a child, I would think I had these feelings for men and I should commit suicide'. From their tales of conflict the men relate that they experienced a great sense of confusion and disorientation with their sexual feelings creating an intense and prolonged period of 'self-harassment'. Morales (1990) created a five-stage ethnic gay and lesbian identity model which included: (1) denying conflicts, (2) bisexuality versus homosexuality, (3) experiencing conflicts in allegiances, (4) establishing priorities in allegiances, and (5) integrating the various communities (Morales, 1990). Lesbians and gay men experience an extreme 'denial of conflicts', as their sexuality is understood and dictated by the heterosexual society at large. What emerges is an internal rationalisation that they justify or balance by claiming that they still have these desires for the opposite sex (stage 2). In addition to this, stage 3 (conflicts in allegiances) is clearly applicable to the Muslim homosexual experience. Homosexual Muslims wrestle with their cultural and religious identity, which prohibits them from acknowledging and expressing their sexual identity. As 'many of the developmental issues arise not from being gay, per se, but from discovering how to assimilate being gay into one's life pattern' (Peacock, 2000: 13).

Yip's (1997) study of gay Christian's has parallels with the experience of my sample. He

comments that many gay Christians consider being gay and Christian as incompatible due to the apparent prohibition of homosexuality in the Bible. By internalising Christian sexual ethics which negate homosexuality, gay Christians experience a significant amount of shame and guilt when they first develop an awareness of their sexuality. Indeed, all the men in my sample initially resisted incorporating their sexual identity into their concept of self. In coming to terms with their sexuality, some participants resorted to a divine conceptualisation to provide them with an explanation of their sexuality and sexual feelings. This forms part of the process of the development of the Muslim homosexual identity. Despite praying to God that their same-sex feelings would 'go away' in the hope that they would eventually develop feelings for the opposite sex, participants in my sample no longer felt that their sexuality was 'abnormal'. The grounds or catalyst for this change was perhaps the eventual acceptance that 'God had made them this way'. From this perspective, 'since gay men . . . are made that way by God, homosexuality is part of God's creation and cannot be considered unnatural or sinful' (Moon, 2002: 315). This statement ('God made them this way') empowered these men. By understanding their sense of self and their sexuality in this manner they were consciously able to combine the two identities together. Yet, for Jamal and Adil this connection was not possible. They firmly believed that homosexuality and religion are separate categories which cannot forcibly be brought together. For both these men, a change in their identity is understood as an either/or alternative. Consequently, this creates a divided, compartmentalised self-concept (Thumma, 1991). Nevertheless, for the following participants these two identities could co-exist: 'I was born gay and then I was born Muslim when I was in the womb of my mother I believe I was gay. Definitely, medical proof is there that you are born gay because of your genes' (Sohail, 29). In a similar vein, Kashif declares: 'God has definitely made me this way, for me Islam is a natural religion you're not supposed to be going against nature and for me my natural way of being is to be gay'. In this way the 'creationist argument' states that:

All sexualities are created, sustained and blessed by God. Thus, homosexuality is as valid and acceptable as heterosexuality. Attributing one's sexuality to God's intended creation is the ultimate justification for its acceptability and unchangeability. If one's sexuality is God-created, it cannot, and most of all, *should not*, be changed. Attributing the responsibility to God renders any efforts to alter any sexual orientation morally reprehensible. In this case, God is presented as the shield to fend off the threat to their identity. (Yip, 1997: 123)

This 'devout' belief is essential as the participants are not only able to feel comfortable with

their sexuality but they are able to rebuild their identity as Muslims. Rodriguez & Ouellette (2000) propose that identity conflict can be alleviated when homosexuals combine their homosexuality and their religious beliefs into a unified understanding of the self. Thus, individuals like Kashif have both a positive gay and religious identity and thus feel no conflict. This belief is further strengthened by some of the men in my sample placing a particular importance in their relationship with God: 'to me Islam is a personal search between me and my God' (Omar, 35). Sohail draws a parallel connection: 'I think being a Muslim is something between you and your Creator, being a Muslim is a very individual link with my Creator, my spirituality'. The men renegotiate the boundaries of their religious identity. This is made possible by conceptualising their sexuality within a religious context which emphasises the concepts of love and compassion, characteristics associated with Allah. During this stage of their homosexual identity development, 'the only possible solution they find to be viable for them is one that maintains both identities. This solution demands a negotiated settlement between the dual core identities' (Thumma, 1991: 344). From the men's perspective, the oppression faced by homosexuals corrupts and taints the image of God as an All Loving and Merciful deity.

My participants believed that religious prohibition of homosexuality emanates not from a sacred decree, but from societal norms and values that have been misrepresented. There was also a strong desire of disputing or negating the heterosexual control on the parameters of what constitutes a Muslim man/woman defined in terms of one's sexuality. As Kashif comments: 'this is between me and God and nobody's going say to me that you are not to have God'. Intimate spiritualness (cf. Yip, 1997) is used to affirm this homosexual identity as it deflects attention away from their sexuality. It was difficult for Omar however, to dismiss that 'homosexuality isn't something that is accommodated, so obviously it is not compatible'. This view is in line with Sohail's remarks that 'the general interpretation is, that it's [homosexuality] a sin. I know that I don't have support from the text'. These conflicting responses are related on the one hand, to the disapproval of the wider Muslim community supported by *hadith* and the Qur'an and on the other hand to the belief that Allah 'has made them this way' coupled with what they regard as their proclivity towards people of the same sex. The ambiguity present in the comments of participants should not be construed as a disagreement, but as evidence of the lack of theological discourse or accommodation that would enable them to delineate a position or 'space' for themselves within the Muslim communities. Indeed, the accommodation of integrating contradictory aspects of the self has been an extremely

tumultuous journey. Participants described a common narrative almost scripted concerning their homosexual identity: 1) initially becoming cognisant of their homosexual identity; 2) experiencing a period of prolonged silence about their sexuality, whereby they gradually came to terms with their 'same-sex attraction'; 3) learning to express their sexual identity, usually as a result of 'coming out'; 4) integrating a sexual identity with other aspects of self (Muslim identity); and 5) refining that identity over time (cf. Sandfort 2000). As a result, some of the men account for their sexuality in the most natural of terms. Therefore, by understanding, accepting and justifying their sexuality using Islam they are not only able to deepen their religious conviction but fully integrate their two identities.

#### 10.5 COMPARISON WITH WHITE BRITISH GAY 'COMMUNITY'

Do my participants' understanding of their sexuality and their lives as homosexual men resemble the social and sexual lives of British White homosexuals? All participants felt that 'Islamaphobia' and racism widespread within the mainstream gay and lesbian 'community':

I think there is a race issue . . . the gay wider society here is very segregated and somehow their committing the same acts of segregation which they were accusing wider society of doing to them. It's also because the predominant gay society here is very much White orientated. . . . The promotion of gay material, projects, gay literature is very much White, six pack, very good looking kind of marketing, it does throw very serious challenges on people who don't identify and not everybody is like that . . . to me it's atrocious and very segregatory (Omar, 35).

Despite this, all seven participants responded that they were active in the White gay scene, with some socialising only with non-Muslim homosexuals. Adil, for example, explained that because he no longer attended meetings at Al-Fatiha, he tended not to socialise with Muslim gay people but did visit gay bars and clubs, although not very frequently. Others also frequented gay bars and clubs, and felt that this was an extension of their expression of their sexuality: 'there's nothing wrong with going to clubs/bars as a gay Muslim man, we just go there to feel happy and there's nothing wrong in being happy and excited and celebrating our life' (Sohail, 29). Although Imtiyaz had been active in the scene, he was now in a long term relationship with his White non-Muslim partner who was HIV positive, therefore, he was now no longer active in the scene. Kashif also commented:

Majority of the times I do hang out in gay clubs and gay bars . . . all of them are non-Muslims. Since I've joined Al-Fatiha I've started going out with more



gay Muslims, there's a connection of different levels, the fact that we're gay, we're Muslims and a lot of them are from the same Pakistani background as me as well. So I can connect on three different levels with them.

Despite the fact that socialising in places where alcohol was served conflicts with Islam's prohibition against consuming/being in a place where alcohol was served, this was rationalised by some of the men:

I used to feel that way in the beginning, everybody is drinking, I used to find it intimidating but not anymore, they'd keep on asking you, every time I go I have to tell them I don't drink' (Sohail, 29)

People have said to me people are drinking there, therefore you shouldn't go, I'm not drinking there . . . I don't see it as an Islamic environment that's definitely not what I see it as, but because it's not Islamic I don't see it as un-Islamic. Those people who are there are not Muslims they have their own culture they have their own religion and they lead their lives according to that so in that respect I suppose it's un-Islamic. In the same way living in this country is un-Islamic cause we're in a different country you know it's in their culture as in Rome do as the Romans do but I'm not going there and drinking.

Indeed, it was through clubs/bars that some of them met their partners and explored their sexuality. Though some of my participants did express the desire for an enduring relationship, only three of my participants were in a long term relationship. Yet, none of these partners were Muslims. Sohail's comments: 'my religion is important to me as an individual, but it doesn't encompass my lover or partner. It would make life socially easier if my partner was of the same faith but then Islam is such an open religion it doesn't matter'. Kashif who was in a long term relationship, commented:

Steven [his partner] and I at the moment don't have a monogamous relationship but it's something that we definitely want. It is open, we have affairs. Because of the distance mainly and also because of the fear of losing each other we were afraid that the stress of being in a monogamous relationship we'd leave each other.

Kashif justifies his sexual affairs and openness as a way of maintaining his long term relationship with his partner. Some of my participants were also active in the political and social struggle for Muslim homosexual recognition in both the wider British and Muslim society. Sohail, Kashif and Imtiyaz were members of Al-Fatiha, and were active promoting a view homosexuality as a positive aspect of a homosexual Muslim identity. Omar, as a health care

professional had set up Al-Habaib, a service that provided information, advocacy, counselling, psychotherapy for people struggling with their faith (Islam) and sexuality. Through his professional involvement in the health service, Omar endeavoured to help homosexual Muslims by informing them 'how to access the services and mental health care especially so that people who need the services will get the services'. Like professional British homosexuals who are involved in offering support to homosexuals, Omar was harnessing his knowledge and wider resources to provide support for Muslims homosexuals. Thus, my homosexual Muslim non-White participants shared many aspects with the wider White gay 'community', such as being involved in the 'gay scene', having social and sexual similarities in their relationships and being active in the struggle for equality. Yet, as a minority within a minority, these men continued to face racism and Islamophobic attitudes as Muslim non-White homosexuals.

#### 10.6 A CHALLENGE TO ISLAMIC HETERONORMATIVITY

By bridging the previously incongruent identities of being homosexual and Muslim, there exists a tension which my participants have attempted (both successfully and unsuccessfully) to relieve. This process has allowed some to confidently state 'I feel entirely Muslim and my homosexuality doesn't come into question really' (Omar, 35). Indeed, from the men's responses there is an underlying premise that the Qur'an/*hadith* interpretation and religious attitudes need to evolve to confront the changes taking place within contemporary 'Western' society. It is vital to examine both the social context and interpretation of the sources of admonishment in Islam:

The general interpretation is it's a sin [homosexuality] but still it does exist . . . why do I feel so confident about me? I as an individual don't think it's a sin, but being part of the community I think it is a sin because that's what the mainstream community thinks. We don't have intellectuals to support it or to talk about it. I don't feel guilty about me being gay I used to but I've reconciled the two I've thought about it and I feel very content now. (Sohail, 29)

Imtiyaz had also reconciled his sexuality with his faith asserting tersely 'I accept who I am'. The endeavour to rebuild and forge this identity was marked by channelling their energy in reconciling their identity as Muslims and their 'new' identity as homosexuals. This progressive process of identity integration is embodied in a support group called Al-Fatiha. The organisation signifies a monumental shift from seclusion to organisation. It aims to support Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered. It is a supportive forum for

exploring and discussing related religious and sexual identities. It was established specifically to promote and help homosexuals integrate their lifestyle with their religious identity. As Sohail (co-ordinator of Al-Fatiha) pointed out: 'we are a collective and we are here to support each other no one should carry the burden alone, we all carry it together'. Membership at Al-Fatiha is an instrumental step in the pursuit of a homosexual Muslim identity. Through the group, they are able to facilitate their integrated identity of being Muslim and homosexual. Indeed, being part of the group legitimises their new identity. For Adil like the others, the 'dissonance between the identities functioned as a motive for change, or dissonance reduction' (Thumma, 1991: 335). He comments:

The important thing is that I began to want to forge the Muslim and gay identity thing when I started going to Al-Fatiha group, because they made me feel, for a short while, as if the two could be forged. So it was the attendance that forged a dual identity, it was the thinking that preceded going to the meetings. (Adil, 25)

In this way, previously dual identities (assumed heterosexuality and closeted homosexuality) become one. It is no longer 'as if there were two men in one body, one gay man and a non-gay man' (Peacock, 2000: 20). Al-Fatiha functions similarly like a gay-positive church, where members are offered a way to integrate their sexual orientation and their religious beliefs (Rodríguez & Ouellette, 2000). Indeed, the participants would often draw comparisons with the struggle Christian homosexuals faced. Kashif talked about the inspiration he drew from his recent trip to San Francisco, where Al-Fatiha inaugurated the annual gay parade:

The Christian speaker said that you guys are where we were 20 years ago but don't stop, keep struggling, keep going on. And it makes me think sometimes is this worth it? All this hassle or the shit. I think maybe I should I have my own Islam, stick to myself, and not try to bring the two together. Then there is the fact that you are gay, as much as you want to deny it you know it's always gonna be there. I cannot *not* be gay. It's either that and not be Muslim or be gay and Muslim, and these guys were saying do it, go for it, it was worth our while we've got a lot out of it, God belongs to all of us. They were saying God is in here [indicating to the heart] don't let somebody else take this in there away, that was so powerful. I thought to myself I don't care what anybody has to say to me, nobody's ever gonna say to me that you can't be gay or Muslim. I don't care what Omar Bakri<sup>1</sup> has to say or Al-Muhajiroun<sup>2</sup>, because

---

<sup>1</sup> The leader of the Al-Muhajiroun group Sheikh Omar Bakri

<sup>2</sup> A radical Islamic group based in London. Sheikh Omar Bakri is the leader, who issued a Fatwa against Al-Fatiha. A press release issued by the group stated that: 'The very existence of Al-Fatiha is illegitimate (not Islamic) and the members of this organisation are apostates. Never will such an organization be tolerated in Islam and never will the disease which it calls for be affiliated with a true Islamic society or individual. The Islamic ruling for such acts is death. It is a duty of the Muslims to prevent such evil conceptions being voiced in the public or private arena. 'Holy War Declared on Out-Gay Muslims'. Reported in the Pink Paper (13th July 2001).

I'm here, I'm gay and Muslim'. For me it was so empowering. (Kashif, 30)

My sample of homosexual men drew influence from gay rights and identity politics in particular the struggle which is most relevant to theirs. Yet, their personal effort at forging this new identity through Al-Fatiha lacks a wider theological accommodation. In their bi-monthly meeting topics under discussion are geared towards embracing a religious model which allows a wider legitimacy of their lifestyle. They question and challenge both the rhetoric of the Qur'an as well as its traditional interpretation. The first issue to consider is the source in which the condemnation is made: through the parable of Prophet Lut in the Qur'an. Some of the participants adopted a similar view to that of homosexual Christians (Perry, 1990; Scroogs, 1983; Boswell, 1980) in explicating the parable. Kashif recounts:

The people of Sodom were not hospitable to travellers they were treated in a very inappropriate manner. It was because they were inhospitable that they were killed, but people have taken from that only the homosexuality part, the forced rape of the males as what was wrong and they were killed for that. I am not forcibly raping any male person. I am not a rapist! The relationships that I enter into are completely consensual and loving.

Both social context and interpretation are extremely critical in their struggle for tolerance and acceptance by the wider Muslim 'community'. Kashif views the parable of Prophet Lut as being about the inhospitality of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the uncontrolled rape. This is not reflective of the loving and equal same-sex relationship that are evident today (Moon, 2002: 319). Similarly, Yip (1997), maintains that Christian homosexuals in his study argue that 'the foundation of the Church's unfavourable treatment of homosexuality is predicated on an erroneous interpretation' of homosexuality in the Bible (Yip, 1997:118). Sohail further elaborates on this issue: 'the Qur'an is a guidance, but remember it is a human interpretation of the Qur'an fourteen hundred years ago and homosexuality of those people. The people of Lut, not the people of Sohail'. This is a contentious issue and it reflects the tentative steps that need to be taken to revise contemporary Muslim thought on homosexuality. Sohail developed the issue further by explicating the use of the word *rajul* used to describe the people of Lut (i.e. the men). He provides a brief interpretative analysis of the *Lutis*:

*Rajul* means a man, a man is defined as a male with characteristics. A *rajul* is a male with certain qualities. We are not that *rajul*, we are male's with good qualities we are not robbers, I am not a rapist, I don't force people to have sex. It does not say a male and a female and remember a man is a male with personal characteristics a woman is a female with personal characteristics, so it

does not say male and female together it says man and a woman it can be a man with male characteristics and another man with female characteristics.

Sohail like Kashif, talks of the inhospitable nature of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. In addition, his understanding of the word *rajul* has a broader reference to marriage and homosexual relationships. Sohail's interpretation shifts the focus away from sex (in a biological sense) to gender. Although traditional gender roles and gender identity are criticised for being heterosexualised and restrictive, in this new understanding gender is employed as an alternative to permit/allow homosexual relationships. This alternative view is not only inclusive but appears to support in a subverted way, traditional roles. That is, within a same-sex couple one would play the male role while the other the female role. The alternative interpretation would reformulate or more appropriately 'modernise' traditional perspectives in light of contemporary social changes. The idea is that the Qur'an, its commentary and interpretation are contextual and this would therefore suggest that *the* homosexuality condemned in the Qur'an during a certain socio-cultural period is relative to that period, and should be open to re-interpretation to reflect contemporary society. This offers a powerful justification for their sexuality: 'the interpretation is not the word of God that's just human words, so why can't other human beings bring out another interpretation and satisfy the reason. It's like stories its references to the incidences happening in that particular social set-up fourteen hundred years ago' (Sohail, 29). Indeed, a re-interpretation would allow them to 'satisfy *their* reason' and as such allow them to justify their sexuality using a religious framework. Therefore, like their Christian counterparts, the participants work to interpret this framework so that it may give them the acceptance they desire. Through this, they end the shame for having debased the heteronormative order which they interpret to be untrue and objectionable (Yip, 1997).

Amongst my male homosexual participants, there was a strong belief that a challenge is imperative in order to confront the unwillingness of the mainstream Muslim society in Britain to address the issue. Closely related to this is questioning the authenticity of *hadith*. This was an issue of debate amongst certain participants, Prophet Muhammad in *hadith* is reported to have castigated and set severe punishments for those caught committing sodomy (i.e. engaging in homosexual acts). By contending that the *hadith* are less than reliable they are able to challenge and lay doubt on the 'alleged' reported sayings of the Prophet on the subject of homosexuality. For these people, 'Islam' encompasses only the Qur'an. In response to this Adil comments:

I've got questions about the *ahadith*, because it's not a reliable source of information. It is purely descriptive and prescribed within a certain moral framework. Also, it does not contain factual statements or information about the issue that would guide one on that issue.

Omar also felt that the accounts of the Prophet's life cannot be accepted as authentic because it is not the word of Allah. Contrary to the above, Jamal drew an explicit connection between *hadith* and Qur'an: 'you cannot have the Qur'an without *hadith* and you cannot have the *hadith* without the Qur'an they are both extremely important'. It is evident that for those who have reconciled their sexuality and faith, the importance of the *hadith* is both questioned and criticised. The 'accommodation' of homosexuals within Muslim society, would only be possible if, as Kashif comments, there is 'more discussion on the sources of *hadith*, it's only when we begin to discuss these issues will gay Muslims be able to go back into mainstream Islam'. This involved exegesis in which the Scripture is analysed from the viewpoint of historical criticism. For my participants, this meant discerning the meaning of homosexuality in the Qur'an by reconstructing and making salient the socio-cultural context of the parable. The issue of conflict, which emerges from their interpretation, is conceptualised as 'contextually relative'. The issue is divided by two distinct camps: those who perceive the scripture as the literal truth (literalists) and those who consider the context as playing an instrumental role in the way scripture has been read (contextualists) (Moon, 2002). Muslim traditional scholars fall in the former camp and homosexual Muslims in the latter. It is interesting to note, that these men only argue for a reinterpretation of the specific verses relating to homosexuality and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. They did not express a great concern about any other issue in the Qur'an. The participants undertook a historical-critical hermeneutic (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Yip, 1997; Thumma, 1991).

#### 10.7 MARRIAGE

Socialisation prepares the individual for the role he/she is to play providing him/her with the necessary repertoire of values and beliefs. The social order prescribes a set of identities, roles and social ties for heterosexuals, which from a religious perspective concerning the sanctity of marriage. At the same time, these heterosexist norms condemn homosexuality and homosexual behaviours, desires, relationships and identities, because such relations challenge and disrupt the social structure. The expectation to marry within Muslim society often overrides personal preferences. The importance of this was remarked upon by Imtiaz: 'three things are important in society amongst Muslims: marriage, children and religion'. Indeed,

declaring one's homosexual identity would not only signify a failure to perform the male obligation, it would also place a considerable doubt over their masculinity (Han, 2000). Conforming to social, cultural and religious norms was extremely important: Kashif, Imtiyaz and Nasir, succumbed to the pressure to marry despite their same-sex desires. For these three participants, marriage was 'an explicit attempt to remove or de-emphasise one's homosexuality because it was regarded as a passing phase which would disappear' (Ross, 1983: 25). Kashif relates: 'I thought marriage would mean that my attraction to men would wither away'. Marriage gave the men a gender appropriate role in society, which in turn, allowed them the opportunity or *try* to relinquish/reject (at least, temporarily) their attraction to men.

These men attempted to negotiate their sexuality in the face of cultural and religious obligations of marriage (more so the former). As Ross (1983) further indicates, 'reasons for marriage . . . do show a considerable preponderance of 'externally' motivated . . . pressures of one sort or another, or secondary manifestations of social pressure' (Ross, 1983: 37). Nasir, although still married, was now separated from his wife and was the only participant who has a child. Despite Kashif's objection to marriage, he was given very little choice on the matter. He explained that his wife (who was his cousin) was also coerced into the marriage. The marriage ended when they divorced a year later without consummation. Disclosing his sexuality soon after, Kashif's family members sought to rectify the 'problem': 'I was working in London at the time, and they told me to come back to Glasgow, to hand in my notice, so they could 'fix me'. That is, they'd make me straight by getting me married again'. Marriage was held to be a remedy for his homosexual 'illness'. However, this allowed Kashif to resolve the issues he had been experiencing with his sexuality since childhood; the divorce allowed him to start developing a sense of his gay self (Peacock, 2000). Imtiyaz attributed his marriage to the importance it held in his family: 'it [marriage] was a procedure, because I always knew I was going to get married. At a young age, it was embedded in me that I was going to get married to my cousin, so we grew up knowing that'. Indeed, 'the situation of homosexual Muslims . . . in the UK is heavily influenced intertwined with ethnic, cultural and racial issue' (Sweasy, 1997: XII). Despite his attraction to men, Imtiyaz was married at the age of nineteen. He insists he fulfilled his duties as a husband, providing and taking care of his wife financially. His life was compartmentalised into his 'heterosexual' life and homosexual life. In the following extract, he recounts the lack of emotional support he provided his wife and the balance he maintained between his homosexual and heterosexual identity:

My wife was very jealous with the relationship I had with my female cousins, because I got on very well with them, but she [wife] couldn't understand why I wasn't like that with her, so emotionally I was never there for her. In the morning, I would be at work or at college, I would go back home in the evening and then at nights I would spend my time at gay clubs. I was spending so much time being straight that I needed to balance it out by being at gay clubs, because it was only there that I was able to be myself. (Imtiyaz, 35)

After 13 years of marriage, Imtiyaz and his wife divorced because of his inability to have children. He insists that his marriage was simply a platform for him to 'play' out the traditional role expected of him by his family, culture and society. However, the subsequent end of his marriage had a considerable impact on Imtiyaz's identity as a homosexual: 'this is the way I was meant to be, I tried to change but it didn't work, so I have no problem with calling myself a homosexual Muslim'. Although getting married was a result of conforming to family and societal expectations, it was also influenced by the desire to 'normalise' their sexual orientation, which, at the time they hoped and felt was malleable. Nevertheless, all three marriages ended in either divorce or separation and their sexuality was the primary factor (cf. Peacock, 2000). For the other participants, marriage was suggested to them repeatedly by friends and family as a possible 'cure' for their homosexuality. However, Sohail, Omar, Jamal and Adil refused to contemplate marriage. They were concerned with the repercussions not only for themselves but also the women they would marry. For the participants who were married, marriage represented what Ross (1983) refers to as the 'conscious flight from homosexuality'. That is, it offered them hope and a source of escape from their sexual discomfort at least temporarily.

#### 10.8 GAY MASCULINITY

During the 1970s, as a direct result of the gay and feminist movement, there emerged a critical enquiry about conventional understanding of what it is to 'be a man'. In the 'West' the oppression of gay men created in gay men a dilemma of masculinity, because the idea of the 'masculine male' is entrenched in heterosexuality, giving gay men no place (Connell: 1995: 143-144). Thus, the gay and feminist movement criticised patriarchal society, which subordinated women and secured the empowerment of men (over women and 'other' men). Both movements criticised the basis upon which masculinity was founded (i.e. power and subordination over others). This inequality was largely based on the assumption that 'real' men are heterosexual men as 'the dominant model of masculinity is of a heterosexual masculinity' (Epstein & Johnson, 1994: 204). Indeed, Blanchford (1981) talks of the



masculinisation of the gay man indicating that the relation between 'masculinity', 'men' and 'gay men' is questionable (Blanchford, 1981, cited in Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994: 13). The positioning of heterosexuality as socially legitimate, 'natural' and 'normal', while 'other' sexualities are regulated and constructed as 'perverted' and 'unnatural', lays the basis and accentuates masculinity as a heterosexual privilege. As Connell (1995) comments in patriarchal society gay men simply lack masculinity.

These ideas are further compounded by the 'institutional element of hegemonic masculinity, which provides it with a social authority that forms perceptions of gayness' (Connell, 1992: 746). Hegemonic masculinity is contrasted with non-hegemonic masculinities. Put simply, 'hegemonic masculinities define successful ways of 'being a man'. In doing so, they define other masculine styles as inadequate or inferior. These related masculinities we call subordinate variants' (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994: 3). Homosexual masculinities, according to this premise, rest at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men as 'gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995: 78). Indeed, an associated element that crops up is the recognition that quite often hegemonic masculine norms create profound divisions between and within groups of men. These norms are classist, racist but also heterosexist (Boyd et al., 1996). These insights into the nature of masculinity forces a recognition that masculinity itself is not a unified or integrated concept. In effect, hegemonic masculinities classify the ways of 'being a man'. In light of the above, when one considers masculinity, one tacitly implies heterosexuality (Badinter, 1995). Heterosexuality is principally experienced as an inherent element in humans (Wilton, 1994). In this way, heterosexual identity functions as the normative: to be heterosexual is above all to be non-homosexual. Homosexuality, then cannot be accommodated as it conflicts with and defies the heteronormative order and the gender ideal set for men and women.

#### 10.8.1 GAY 'ETHNIC' MASCUINITY

Thus far there have only been a handful of researchers (Yip & Pilgrim, 2002; Murray & Roscoe, 1997; Tapinc, 1995) who are developing gay identity theories that can be applied to an ethnic (i.e. non-white) population. The accommodation of discrepant identities is considerably more difficult if homosexuality is not discussed or debated. In countries such as Pakistan, where Islam predominates (cf. Murray, 1997; Khan, 1997), the subject continues to be clouded in ignorance and in an intentional neglect of homosexuals, thus leaving very little room to provide

the support required by homosexuals. The traditional and continued silence on the issue of homosexuality prevents many with homosexual feelings from identifying as homosexuals. This was reflected in varying levels of openness of the participants' sexuality. Coming out, which is defined as the 'expression to the dramatic quality of privately and publicly coming to terms with a contested social identity' (Seidman et al., 2002: 427), was overwhelmingly met with a lack of acceptance and at worse by violence:

My father shouted at me, swore at me, spat on me, slapped me, kicked me, it was the most disgusting behaviour I'd ever seen. My uncle was in the same room and he was disgusted . . . my aunt and mum came up wanting to know what the hell was going on to Kashif, she broke into tears and started screaming, that's what really got to me cause I could take what my father was giving me you know if you just sit here long enough the sun will rise and you get up and go, but my mother crying I couldn't deal with. (Kashif, 30)

Kashif's account illustrates that 'coming out' can be both traumatic and, in extreme cases, have violent repercussions. Nevertheless, Kashif's disclosure allowed him to build his identity as a homosexual. Yet, his family continued to try to 'help' him: 'my big brother who's a Doctor felt he could actually talk me into being straight, we went for a coffee a long drive I'm like "what the fuck is he on about". Through his financial and spatial independence (Kashif moved from Glasgow to London) he was able to explore, affirm and strengthen his new homosexual identity. There was an association between living at home and the degree of openness of their sexuality, for instance:

Because I don't live with them [his parents] I don't directly interfere in their life and they don't directly interfere in my life. I think homosexuality in societies has a lot to do with if you're living with them [parents/family] you will be more concerned with what the immediate family and extended family members are thinking. Parents are more concerned with "oh my God what will the neighbours say", you know *duniya waley kya kehengay* [what will society/people say]. They will accept it perhaps as long as I am away from them. (Sohail, 29)

This was a frequent response. Men who were financially and spatially independent were far more likely to accept their sexuality. When living at home, they were unable to come to terms with their sexuality and or to pursue relationships or simply lead a homosexual lifestyle. This independence also allowed the men to emotionally detach themselves from their family. This was particularly the case if their sexuality had created problems within the family:

Every time I called my mother, she would go on about the gay issue and I said to her this is no longer my problem to deal with, I'm happy with myself this is something you have to understand and accept. (Kashif, 30).

Still, not all participants had disclosed their sexuality:

Lets assume (emphasis here!) that I was to come out to family. It would be like a grieving process for them there would be about 10 weeks of hell and then things may calm down, but the uneasiness would always be there. And frankly I can't put my ageing parents through this, it would destroy them, they are too old and too set in their ways. (Adil, 25)

Sohail (29) maintains that his parents are aware of his sexuality but he states: 'it's just I haven't affirmed it'. His parent's awareness came from the knowledge of his affairs with older men and from being caught in a sexual act with another boy by his father. He recollects his treatment by his parents: 'I hated her [mother] so much! She used to call me *bhund marao* [bum basher]. I used to feel so bad inside. My father was more physical. He beat me up about four or five times really really badly'. Imtiyaz described how he was shunned by his father who no longer regarded him as his son: 'my father didn't talk to me for a whole year, he went berserk. He wouldn't want to go anywhere with me, if I went to visit them [parents] and I walked into the room, he would either ignore me or leave the room'. The situation for Jamal was significantly different: a confrontation with his father regarding his arranged marriage prompted him to disclose his sexuality to his parents. Despite the freedom and lack of interference from his family to live his life as a homosexual, a 'don't ask' - 'don't tell' situation unfolded. There has never been any informal or formal discussion or talk of his sexuality. Omar's experience was the most positive from the participants. He relates that his parent's reaction was of 'contemplation and understanding rather than sadness or regret'. He further adds that 'if you come beyond the stage of conflict and acceptance then you can begin to live comfortably as a person'. Consequently, the negotiated identity allows the men to acknowledge their homosexuality, however, this does not involve a rejection of their faith (Thumma, 1991). Despite this, 'coming out' is a liberating process for those men who are able to consciously and publicly affirm their sexuality; the oppression they experienced is transformed positively.

#### 10.9 CHALLENGE TO HETERONORMATIVITY

Heterosexist norms create and promote a heterosexual masculinity. This norm is based upon a static binary of male/female, the antithesis of this construct is in effect the homosexual male.

Indeed, the homosexual male as part of his self-identification challenges the dominant gender sexual paradigms and 'appropriate gender behaviour' (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000). Not surprisingly, the men's view corresponded with the need to base relationships on equality. As Omar tersely points out, 'there are no dichotomies for me at all'. For other participants, the general use of the term 'gender roles' was regarded as constrictive and oppressive. Instead many preferred to sum up their feelings by claiming that relationships ought to be based on equality, not gender specific roles. In some instances, the participants chose not to define themselves as being either masculine/feminine, although they easily provided the heterosexist definition of 'what is regarded as masculine and feminine'. Omar typified this view: 'one can't strictly compartmentalise the roles of men and women'. Nasir only after several prompts advocated that equality should characterise relationships: 'I share a house with a lesbian, that doesn't mean that she does the dishes because she's a woman, if I need help putting up shelves she helps me because she is physically more capable than I am' (Nasir, 40). Thus, 'for some gay men, their gayness is a way to challenge masculinity, personally, through nonconformity to certain roles and identities' (Edwards, 1994: 46).

It was felt that heterosexual based guidelines could and would be applicable for homosexual relationships. Omar held the view that his 'family' (composed of his non-Muslim male partner and children) as compared to the traditional family unit 'would be Islamic because we would direct our lives in the way Islam wants us, it's the qualities of Islam which are important to me than the actual role model of the family'. Yip (1997) similarly found that a large number of his Christian participants believed that their relationships work on general Christian principles such as mutual sharing, love, faithfulness and devotion (Yip, 1997: 121-122). There was a belief that instead of restricting or confining the family to its traditional heterosexist sense, homosexuals would equally be able to fulfil the role of the 'husband' and father: 'what is marriage? It is to provide emotional support, care and companionship. I've provided care and everything to my boyfriend so I've been a husband, I can marry a man and fulfil the responsibility of marriage' (Sohail, 29). Other studies have found that in attempting to integrate conflicting sexual and religious identities homosexuals go through 'a process of socialization: they renegotiate the boundaries and definitions of their religious identity to include a positive valuation of homosexuality' (Thumma, 1991: 333). At present, Kashif was the only participant to have had a 'commitment ceremony'. Being in a committed relationship reflects a commitment to re-negotiate their personal identity (Yip, 1997). Kashif, was one of few who expressed his desire to have a family in the future. He did not believe that the family

in its traditional heterosexual sense should restrict him from fulfilling the role of the 'husband' and father. Although my participants realised that at present Muslim marriage would be impractical (religiously, socially and legally), there is little to prevent the social roles being fulfilled and the modification they suggest would quite easily be accommodated under the importance of the family in Islam. Sohail conveyed his concerns with the desire to adopt the model of marriage:

I think we have to define it [marriage], because we don't have any structured marriage as such. We can't have sex before marriage in our [Muslim] society to begin with, so you can only talk about adultery or fornication if you're married. (Sohail, 29)

Homosexual Muslims do not have an elaborate standard set of guidelines with which to live their lives and behave. Interestingly, all three participants who were in a relationship, had partners who were non-Muslim. When asked to indicate the importance of both 'parents' being Muslim, Kashif replied: 'we need more discussion to help gay Muslims and to help the heterosexual Muslims accept gay Muslims back into mainstream Islam'. However, for Omar this is not problematic: he provides an analogy which illustrates the point of prescribed roles in religion:

It is similarly like if a Doctor gives you medication for prescription and you refuse to take it, because you feel ill off the effects that it may have on you, you are not to be hospitalised just because you have refused unless of course, you are doing acts which really threaten other members of society. Similarly to get back to sexuality if that person because of his sexuality is going around having sex without consent with everybody and doing acts of an untoward nature then of course he will be constrained and condemned for that. But in the Islamic context by Islam prescribing that and if a man doesn't follow that or cannot follow it for whatever reason he is not one to be ultimately condemned. (Omar, 35)

The following quote recounted by Sohail is rich in insight and detail as to the way homosexuals are able to reverse the traditional gender roles. It establishes how they attempt to revise the current gender model and how it may be achieved by relinquishing or revising gender specific behaviour:

Once we made women sit and we [men] prepared everything and an idea was thrown up that the men should come in *hijab*, all of them, so women can't see men and there should be no lust. The only reason why Islam segregates the sexes is because they have lust for each other. Gay men have no lust for

women [laughs]. It was such an emotional thing we did all the five prayers together. We asked an *Imam* if it was OK and he said yes, he was a member of the *Shariah* Council of Britain. He came to our conference [1999 Al-Fatiha London Conference], he wasn't pro-homosexual but he wasn't hard-liner either. We made Saira lead the prayer because I really wanted to change the patriarchal system. I said Sophia would start the conference with a recitation from the Qur'an. Islam is not a patriarchal religion, the woman has a very defined role so she started the conference with a recitation of the Qur'an and the translation and the welcome address. You know normally when it comes to gay conferences it's always a man. Similarly, when I asked Saira to do it, she wasn't sure and I said: "no, you have to", you know a man who is sensitive about his identity and then you see a Muslim woman, a lesbian leading prayer how encouraging is that! You know there are a lot of issues that women can't talk about in the presence of men last year at the conference we dedicated two hours for women, not a single man was allowed in that room, women had their own space about 40 of them all Muslim lesbian or bisexual women and we weren't even allowed in. The only time I went inside was with a *hijab* on because we were reversing the roles, that why can't the man wear the *hijab*, not to look at the women when there having their own private meeting. So I had to wear a kind of a *hijab* and then I walked in the room [laughs] and they all started laughing and I said "no this is your space", and I came out. We went back to a friend's house and we made tea and dinner for the women and then when the women came back all the food was laid out. So all the lesbians came and we prepared tea for them rather than women preparing for men, that was a great thing! (Sohail, 29)

A number of points emerge from Sohail's account. He mentions that men and women in the Qur'an are segregated on the basis of their sexual attraction to one another and therefore religion prescribes that the sexes should be separated. Yet, he fails to highlight the problem of segregation when discussing homosexual men and lesbians. In other words, although 'gay men have no lust for women' but rather a 'lust for men', there is no segregation between men and other men (heterosexual or homosexual). He illustrates how change is both possible and desirable as opposed to prescribing what men can do and woman cannot do on the basis of their gender. Indeed, as a stigmatised minority, the men contest the rigidity of heterosexual gender roles, calling for changes to cultural attitudes and repudiating the idea of a divinely decreed heterosexuality.

Participants in my sample declared that they play both traditionally feminine and masculine roles. Many lived on their own or in shared accommodation. All were in employment and therefore financially independent, but they were also domesticated (they cooked and cleaned). Indeed, participants frequently expressed the idea that within contemporary society they are able to reverse or 're-script' traditional gender roles. Many subverted the roles insofar that

they felt they could play both: 'I play both parts, I cook for myself, I work for myself, and I provide for myself' (İmtiyaz, 35). Indeed, gay men do not recreate the male provider role in their relationships, rather they choose a more egalitarian one and equally share economic responsibility (Risman & Schwartz, 1988). This approach underlines that gay men pose a threat to the heteronormative structures as they defy contemporary heterosexual social and sexual relations. Thus, Segal (1990) sees homosexuality as symbolising the prospect of real change to the institution of the monogamous heterosexual family because it falls outside of this institute. It would create a new form of 'community' and morality which would defy and undermine patriarchal familial ideology. Instead, by moving beyond a constrictive gender regime there is a promotion of a composite personality: one that encompasses both masculine and feminine traits as some of my participants expressed. The pursuit of forging a distinct masculinity for gay men is evidently underway. Due to the perpetual reformulation of masculinity as a social construct (Connell, 1995, 1992; Harris, 1995; Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994), it no longer presents a 'unified concept of self, but rather [in postmodern society] the self has become fragmented and exists in pieces' (Seidler, 1997: 12).

Indeed, there is a wealth of critical literature from lesbian, gay and feminist academics that challenge the aforementioned social constructions of sexuality. This literature further refutes the binary classification of sexuality as being outmoded and inappropriate in current thought. The ultimate aim appears to be to create sexual plurality and diversity. In conjunction with this, gay groups preserve and assert their social spaces and resist various forms of social and cultural oppression. With the advent of support groups (such as Al-Fatiha), strong claims are made for their own 'space' as homosexuals are socially pressured not to define their relationships, continuing the false assumption that they do not exist either individually or in families. Support groups such as Al-Fatiha raise a multitude of problems faced by Muslim homosexuals. It provides a mechanism where the group members are able to 'speak for themselves. However, Adil was critical about the function Al-Fatiha served. Despite initially attending the meetings he gradually felt despondent about the purpose it served for the homosexual Muslim 'community':

I knew what the deal was with them [Al-Fatiha] they would be like let's bung a bit of kind of shredded Qur'an excerpts here and there as well. As a new person coming in, surely their [Al-Fatiha] role should be saying, 'this is the bit in the Qur'an (if they can find it!) that says 'it's ok you can be a Muslim and gay' but the point is that ain't going to happen, so what is your function? Why are you there? They go on about that it's a support group but how can it be a

support group if the core issue of which you are supporting is so irreconcilable, not just in the eyes of mainstream Muslims but in the eyes of gay Muslims. (Adil, 25)

Adil's critical words indicate the difficulty faced by homosexuals in their endeavour to reconcile and integrate these incongruent identities. For Adil, religion provides no strategy to facilitate an integrated homosexual and Muslim identity. As a result, this has led him to 'psychologically distance' (Yip, 1997) himself from Islam. Being homosexual and Muslim is not enough for identity integration to occur. To assuage the conflict, he has rejected his Muslim identity. There is a recognition that before changes can occur: 'a lot of working is required, it needs acceptance and conflict resolution by the Islamic society as a whole, coming to an understanding if not accepting and tolerating' (Omar, 37). Thus, irrespective of their optimism regarding change, there was an acknowledgement that religious guidelines specifically for homosexual's demands extensive dialogue and intellectual articulation from the mainstream Muslim 'community'. There is a practical acknowledgment that a definitive religious guideline for homosexuals demands both extensive thought as well as time. Sohail remained realistic of changes in thought and discourse:

The first thing is that we have to start from scratch to find out what Islam says about homosexuality, we need more people from the *Ulamā* to talk about it, and first they have to identify, yes, we have homosexuals, homosexuality does exist and the second thing is it a disease? Is it gender orientated or is it their genes? You can imagine how many levels we have to go through, so guidelines are something that are way down on the list it will take years or centuries to form guidelines. (Sohail, 29)

For Adil, however, 'the tolerance issue in Islam is the only possible way . . . if there were to be a resolve it would only be for tolerance it would never be full acceptance'. Similarly, Dossani (1997) maintains that the Qur'an is a book which acknowledges social change. That is, although the Qur'an views Judaism and Christianity as being relevant in its time, they were both replaced by Islam. Therefore, there is a process of evolution in thought and God's truth as reflected in the Qur'an. In this way, Dossani advocates that 'such evolution did not stop with the founding of Islam, that God understands that society changes and that therefore, that God recognises that humanity has evolved to a stage where it is acceptable for some people, including Muslims, to be gay' (Dossani, 1997, cited in Moon, 2002: 322)



#### 10.10 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to examine heterosexual participant's views and attitudes towards homosexuality; how they constructed their ideas; and how they justified these views. Heterosexual participants expressed homonegative and heterosexist views. They did not perceive being homosexual as a legitimate social, personal or religious identity. Moreover, for a significant number of participants, homosexuals were 'defined solely in terms of their sexuality' (Berrill & Herek, 1992: 94). Participants did not differentiate 'between the value of homosexual persons and the value of homosexual behaviour'. For a large number of heterosexual male and female participants (86% were against homosexuality), views about homosexuals ranged from outright disgust, a sense of unnaturalness about their sexual behaviour and relationships, to moderate attitudes tolerating and accepting homosexuals. However, toleration was qualified, because it was preceded by comments about homosexuality being wrong, unnatural and contrary to religion. Heterosexual participants' views were protected, legitimate and correct because it was a set of ideas dictated by their religion. Indeed, religiosity was seen to be a factor in the negative views on homosexual, since a large number of participants who were against homosexuals were practising Muslim. Homonegativity and heterosexism were intimately interwoven with basic, important aspects of the participants' belief system and cultural upbringing. In essence, accepting homosexuality is inconsistent with the dominant gender ideal in the Qur'an: it disrupts the essential idea of what it means to be a man and woman (marriage, fatherhood/motherhood). Homosexuality subverts the sexual and gender norms, which are: 'heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive, non-commercial, coupled, relational, same generational, and private' (Berrill and Herek, 1992: 96). Indeed, participants opposing homosexuality assert the legitimacy and righteousness of heterosexuality through marriage and family. The inability of homosexuals to procreate was further used to reinforce social, religious and cultural norms which continue to suppress homosexuals from emerging and legitimating their claim to an religious identity. Homosexuality is unregulated and bound by no institutional or religious discourse. However, some (non-practising) participants did not use Islam to construct their ideas about homosexuality; rather they offered a more liberal and open view regarding non-heterosexual relationships, one that respected both the homosexual person and their right and freedom to form relationships. Nevertheless, there were non-practising Muslims who were just as critical of homosexuality as their practising counterparts.

I examined the views of heterosexuals by examining the lives of some homosexual Muslim

men. The aim was to examine how they combine a set of incongruent identities in order to construct a Muslim homosexual identity. I also focussed on the personal, sexual and religious journey and conflicts experienced by some Muslim homosexual men. The responses from my homosexual participants indicate that 'people of faith can use the same scriptures, but arrive at vastly different conclusions about how God created human nature and what God intends for people' (Moon, 2002: 318). Contrary to the views of heterosexual Muslim participants, for my homosexual participants, it was possible to reinterpret the Qur'an and reject the *hadith* in order to produce a 'homosexual-friendly' interpretation of the Qur'an. Moreover, groups such as Al-Fatiha, who offer support in preserving both identities, have undertaken the accommodation of discrepant identities. As a gay space, it is 'a place where the expression of the true self can be allowed' (Warren, 1974: 32). In essence, the participants argued for a legitimate expression of their sexuality, faith and spirituality and faulted the wider Muslim community for failing to address the issue. The heterosexual views on homosexual and the homosexual views on sexuality and religion, allowed a comparative look between hegemonic masculinity (heterosexual men) and subordinated masculinity (homosexual men). What it also highlighted was that although the influence of organised religion has in recent years been substantially weakened in the 'West', the lasting legacy of religious discourse for British Muslims is clearly reflected in contemporary attitudes and views relating to sexuality and homosexuality.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### CONCLUSION

#### 11.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS

I endeavoured in this thesis to contribute to the sociological study of gender and sexuality from a Scottish Muslim perspective. My intention was not to favour one over the other but to bring the two together. In this conclusion, I provide a brief overview of the main findings of my study in order to situate my research and to 'make room' for a religious perspective of gender in contemporary sociology. I also discuss the limitations of this study, directions for future research, and finally how my own views changed because of my research. What is evident from my thesis and from the literature on Islam is that there is no 'one' Islam. Islam is one tree but with many branches, each sheltering and providing support to different strands of thought. In essence, there are many 'Islams'. Islam for traditional scholars differs from the Islam of modernist feminist scholars, and both differ from the 'new' interpretation of Islam by homosexuals. Indeed, homosexual Muslims have fractured the division between conventional traditional and modernist discourse.

Traditional scholars claim orthodoxy and supremacy over other accounts because they rely on a literal interpretation of the Qur'an, which they endorse by referring to the *hadith*. Modernist scholars (mostly Islamic feminists) seek to interpret the Qur'an in a gender-neutral manner. In order to achieve this they detract attention away from the *hadith*, which they see as the primary source and cause of an oppressive interpretation of gender in Islam. Muslim homosexuals are an interesting mixture of the two. They are 'traditional' in the sense that they locate their sense of self in traditional religion. They are modernist, or perhaps more appropriately, radical activists because they call for a 'reinterpretation' of the Qur'an itself in order to carve out a position for themselves. My research reveals that there is a multifarious interplay between religion, gender and sexuality. The aim of my thesis was not to provide a general account of the lives of *all* Muslims but rather to indicate how a group of people in Glasgow understand their gender roles and identities and how they construct their gender according to their understanding of their religion. Indeed, it is probable that replicating my research in a Muslim country or even England may not generate similar results. However, this is a possible area of future research. I was not only interested in the role that religion plays but also the migratory history of Glasgow Muslims, whether assimilation and integration to their host 'Western' country influenced and shaped their views on gender. Moreover, I have

been careful not to generalise the results of my research to the whole of the Scottish/British Muslim population. Therefore, future research is encouraged to see whether the findings of my research are common or particular to my group of sample of Muslims in Glasgow. My thesis reveals that for Muslims in the 'West' being a Muslim is more than a religious identity. It does not merely involve a set of daily practices, it embraces their entire life: the way they dress, the occupations they choose to do, their behaviour towards others and significantly, for this study, the gender roles they play in the home and in society. Muslims, as a category need to be acknowledged in future research. Their lives are a composite and layered set of identities, which should not be ignored. Although many of my male and female participants identified themselves as practising Muslims, those who did not still retained their Muslim identity in a cultural and ethnic sense. Therefore, religion remains culturally and socially important.

My thesis highlights several key ideas. It underlies the importance of 'natural' differences between men and women for my sample of Glasgow Muslims. The difference was understood to be the cause of the dichotomy of men into masculine and women into feminine. Although these gender constructs are conceived of as socially constructed in the 'West' by sociologists and feminists, my participants do not dismiss essentialists' explanations of the difference between men and women, nor do traditional Muslims scholars. Rather this is the predominant view adopted in the explanations of gender differences. Indeed, this underscores a significant departure from contemporary sociology. Nevertheless, some participants understood, like 'Western' sociologists, the socially constructed nature of gender. On the issue of femininity and masculinity, my study integrated and adopted an unconventional approach to the study of gender not only by incorporating religion, but also by highlighting the relational aspect of masculinity and femininity. I recognised that gender is relational (Bird, 1996) and thus, it was difficult to detach masculinity from femininity and vice versa. I added a new perspective to the study of femininity by exploring the views of Muslim men and on masculinity by examining the views of Muslim women. Through this approach, I have been able to demonstrate the way men and women contribute to and maintain gender differences. For my Scottish and immigrant Muslim participants, masculinity and femininity were always viewed in contrast to each other and thought of in terms of social roles such as husband/wife and father/mother. In their research, 'Western' feminists assume and universalise the experiences of all women in their adoption of a socially constructed notion of gender. I provided a critique of historical and contemporary feminist accounts of marriage and motherhood, which demonise and attack the

male as the cause of women's oppression, while ignoring the complementary relationship between men and women. This was endemic in sociological work on gender and sexuality. That is, the subject of gender was always approached from a model of conflict. Another problem with sociological research on gender is the atheist bias. Typically, when religion is discussed in sociological studies of gender, it is regarded as a social tool, which can be used to manipulate relationships (usually in favour of the man). These studies take a Marxist or Durkheimian view that religion is a figment of people's imaginations or a social tool. What is lacking in sociological research is an acceptance of people's strong religious beliefs.

In addition to offering a new perspective on the study of gender and religion, my research also added an ignored dimension of [homo]sexuality. Religion, gender and sexuality were brought together to explore the 'new' 'Western' created identity of the homosexual Muslim. My sample of heterosexual Muslim participants degraded, stigmatised and marginalised homosexual Muslims, because they challenge the very idea of what it means to be a man and woman. There was a belief that homosexuals disrupt what many heterosexuals believe to be the divine distinction of the way Allah has created humankind. Although the majority of heterosexual participants were against the idea of homosexuality, homosexual Muslims in an attempt to combine their previously held incongruent ideas, undermine the very ideals heterosexuals expressed. Indeed, the notion of nature and nurture do not sit comfortably together: homosexuals challenge the essentialist view that if one is a man or woman, then one must be a heterosexual. Moreover, they also challenge the idea of masculine identity. These men do not feel the need to express a fictitious masculine identity to complement their sexual identity. Indeed, they work to erode gender ideas, which compelled them to live their lives as 'heterosexual'.

## 11.2 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

I couple together the limitations of the study with future research, because I feel that the limitations can be accounted for and remedied by future research. Although it was not my intention to seek practising Muslims. I feel the study is limited by this characteristic of the participants. To expand this research further, I would include ethnic and cultural Muslims (Sanders, 1997) in order to compare and reflect the diversity of Muslims in Britain. Moreover, I would also include Muslims who are from a working class background; not as highly educated as my own sample; and non-practising. There have been significant advances in the study of masculinity/masculinities in the 'West'. Nevertheless, there remains a huge gap in the

literature on the relationship between Muslim men, sexuality and gender, which merits reflection and which should be of future academic interest in sociology. Research should take into account the diversity amongst Muslim men and women in terms of class, ethnicity and sexuality. Given that a large number of my participants were practising Muslims, it would be interesting to see how non-practising and working class Muslims define gender. Although I have attempted to begin the discussion of Muslim men and sexuality, this needs to be expanded to include British Muslim homosexuals from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. By examining regional, cultural and ethnic differences, we would allow greater diversity in the research on homosexual Muslims. Although I recognised the difficulty in finding Muslim lesbians, future research on this 'hidden' population of Muslims would not only contribute and complement the work on male homosexual Muslims, it would also expand our understanding of what it means to be a Muslim woman in Islam. Just as my work on homosexual men questioned the heteronormative structure in Islam, Muslim lesbians too, would challenge the understanding of normative femininity in Islam. How do these women wrestle with issues of marriage and motherhood? How do their experiences differ from Muslim homosexual men? Are they a minority (Muslim), within a minority (women) within a minority (lesbian)?

### 11.3 PERSONAL JOURNEY

I include this section because I feel my experience of doing the PhD has provided me with the opportunity to develop as a sociologist and also recognise changes within me as a person and as a Muslim. I began this study with a very naïve and simple view of the social world and of Islam. In spite of the fact that I recognised that there are different branches of Islam, I felt that there was only One true view. Although I still believe in a universal orthodox perspective, I am now able to see different branches and perspectives of Islam and not limit my outlook. My personal views on masculinity, femininity and in general gender, have also changed from one dominant view, to the recognition of the multifarious ways to interpret how people make sense of their own gender identity. Perhaps one of the major changes in me and my way of thinking has come about through of my involvement with Muslim homosexuals. One particular situation that embodies this change is when I was invited to attend one Al-Fatiha's bi-monthly meeting during my fieldwork. As I arrived and sat there I felt nervous and intimidated, I would not have imagined sitting in a room with 12 homosexual men and women. I felt guilty because I felt that I was betraying my views and principles by being there. At this meeting, I was the minority and felt extremely uncomfortable. However, I was able to empathise with

the situation of homosexual Muslims. A minority within a minority, they had to endure a feeling of marginalization and separation most of their lives. It was difficult for me to take on an objective position, given that they most likely perceived me as a 'traditional Muslim', since I was the only one with the *hijab* on. As I sat there, in front of the entrance, I received curious glances as well as polite smiles and 'hello's'. I was introduced as a PhD student who was studying Muslim homosexuals. The co-ordinator asked me to describe my research and then allowed some of the members to ask me questions. Although most were simply curious, as to what it was that I was studying, one person took on a more abrasive tone and attitude asking me what my view on homosexuality was. I felt extremely intimidated respecting my hosts I chose to give a diplomatic and tactful response: I replied that I have not had the opportunity to learn or move beyond the traditional position of Islam on homosexuality. He harshly riposted 'so, you think it's a sin and we should all be killed?' I responded that I was not there to judge, but to learn and understand how they live their lives as homosexual Muslims. Thankfully, the co-ordinator intervened and began the meeting. Nevertheless, I was made to feel welcome and accommodated irrespective of what they perceived to be my personal views. The experience of my fieldwork with homosexuals led me to confront my traditional ideas about homosexuality. Indeed, I myself, had to learn to differentiate 'between the value of homosexual persons and the value of homosexual behaviour' (Bassett et al., 2001). I also recall a conversation I had with the co-ordinator of Al-Fatiha. He praised me for my interest in their 'cause' and struggle saying that 'the mainstream Muslim 'community' don't want to listen'. I replied 'that I am part of that mainstream Muslim 'community''. He said, 'no you're very liberal minded, you're willing to hear us out'. I had not realised how my views and attitudes were changing and had changed, I had to take a step backward in order to see myself objectively. However, as mentioned in the introduction I do not see my identities as a Muslim and sociologist as mutually exclusive. Rather I have linked them together.

I end this thesis by saying that my study makes a contribution to the sociology of gender mainly through its inclusion of a religious dimension. It reveals the importance of integrating two different aspects of enquiry and guiding principles: Islam and Sociology. There have been many sociological works on religion and gender, but they often take an atheist view that religion is not real. However, as we saw with my participants, the influence of religion on the lived and real experiences of Muslims in Britain today is far too significant to dismiss. For example, the role that religion plays in constructing ideas about masculinity/male role and femininity/female role was essential for many participants. Not only is religion an essential

tool in providing a narrative to the lives of Muslims living in Britain, it also adds a new dimension to understanding the interplay between gender and sexuality. To end, I hope that my study contributes to the literature on gender and sexuality in contemporary sociology despite not following the traditional modes and methods of enquiry by including religion.



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### HETEROSEXUAL PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

##### DOMESTIC WORK

Who does the housework? (washing up, cooking, ironing, cleaning etc.)

Who is responsible for childcare?

Who is responsible for the children's religious education?

##### ISLAM

Is Islam important in your life?

Is the Qur'an and the *hadith* a source of guidance for you in your life?

What does being a Muslim mean to you?

##### MARRIAGE

What do you feel is the purpose of marriage?

If I was to ask you who the head of the family is, who would it be?

What's your view on homosexuality?

Do you think homosexual relationships are as equal as heterosexual relationships?

Do you feel that heterosexuality is the only acceptable form of having a relationship?

What do you consider your duty to be as a father/mother and husband/wife?

##### MASCULINITY/FEMININITY

What does masculinity and femininity mean to you?

What do you consider feminine/masculine behaviour?

What do you consider the opposite of masculine/feminine behaviour?

Do you think Islam provides guidelines for masculine and feminine roles to be played by men and women?

What's your view of women/men assuming or taking on the traditional role set out for men/women (a total role reversal - being the sole breadwinner, being the housewife etc)?

Do you regard yourself as masculine/feminine?

Do you think it's important for women to dress modestly?

## APPENDIX B

### HOMOSEXUAL PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### ISLAM

Is Islam important in your life?

Is the Qur'an and the *hadith* a source of guidance for you in your life?

What does being a Muslim mean to you?

How important is your religious identity in your life?

#### FAMILY

Are your family members and friends aware that you are a homosexual?

What's your view of the traditional heterosexual family unit, headed by the male accompanied by the wife and children?

#### GENDER ROLES

In Islam, scholars argue that the Qur'an specifies the roles expected to be played by men as husbands and fathers and women as mothers and wife's, what role do you see yourself playing?

Do you feel that you have had to conform to a socially prescribed role?

#### IDENTITY

How important is your sexuality in your social and personal identity?

Do you have any concerns with regards to being a homosexual and a Muslim?

Have your ideas about homosexuality or your definition of homosexuality changed over time?

Do you perceive yourself as an Asian/Arab homosexual or Muslim homosexual?

How old were you when you first defined yourself as a homosexual?

Do you feel that there is a conflict between your Muslim homosexual identity and western notion of homosexual identity?

Do you socialise (go to clubs, bars etc.) with other Muslim homosexuals or non-Muslim Homosexuals?

#### MASCULINITY & FEMININITY

What do the words in your personal experience do masculinity and femininity mean?

What do you consider feminine/masculine behaviour?

What do you consider unfeminine/un-masculine behaviour?

Do you consider yourself to be masculine?

#### SEXUALITY

What is your opinion of homosexuality/heterosexuality?

How do you bridge the gap between the established teachings of the Qur'an and your sexuality?

Do you think that homosexuality is compatible with the teachings of the Qur'an?

Have you ever felt the need or been pressurised to see somebody concerning your sexuality (psychologist, psychiatrist etc.)?

#### RELATIONSHIPS

If you were/have been in a long term relationship and decided to have children through one method or another, would you see that being a family unit in the religious sense?

APPENDIX C  
HETEROSEXUAL SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

HOUSEHOLD NUMBER:

INTERVIEW NUMBER:

My name is Asifa Siraj, I am a student at the University of Glasgow. I am conducting research for a PhD in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. The purpose of this research is to examine masculinity and femininity from a Muslim perspective. In order to examine this I need the following information from you. I would be grateful if you could fill out the questions below in order for me to complete this research. All information obtained will be treated with the strictest of confidentiality and will not be used for any purpose other than for the research of my thesis. Thank You.

SECTION I - PERSONAL DETAILS (PLEASE TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE)

Q1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐ Q2. Date of Birth: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_ Q2a. Age: \_\_\_\_ Q3. Country of Birth: \_\_\_\_

Q4. Nationality: \_\_\_\_ Q5. Lived in Scotland For: All My Life ☐ Years ☐ Months ☐

Q6 Ethnic Origin: Black-African ☐ Please Specify Country: \_\_\_\_  
Black-Other ☐ Please Specify Country: \_\_\_\_  
Pakistani ☐  
Indian ☐  
Arab ☐ Please Specify Country: \_\_\_\_  
White European ☐ Please Specify Country: \_\_\_\_  
White Other ☐ Please Specify Country: \_\_\_\_  
Other Please State: \_\_\_\_

Q7. Would You Describe Yourself by Your: Nationality ☐  
Ethnicity ☐  
Race ☐  
Gender ☐  
Religion ☐  
Other Please State: \_\_\_\_

Q8. Level of Education: School ☐  
College Diploma ☐  
University Degree ☐  
B.A./BSc in: \_\_\_\_  
Post-Graduate Degree ☐  
M.A./MSc in: \_\_\_\_  
PhD in: \_\_\_\_  
Other Please State: \_\_\_\_

Q9. Occupation:    Employed ☐  
                          School/College/University Student ☐  
                          Academic/Researcher ☐  
                          Unemployed ☐  
                          Housewife/Husband ☐  
                          Retired ☐  
                          Other Please State: \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

⌘ SECTION II - ISLAMIC IMPORTANCE (PLEASE TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE)

Q10. Importance of Religion:    Very Important ☐    Q11. Are You:    Sunni ☐  
    Fairly Important ☐     Shi'a ☐  
    Not Important ☐    Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

Q12. Would You Say You Were a:    Practising Muslim ☐  
    Non-Practising Muslim ☐

Q13. How Frequently Do You Pray?    Five Times a Day ☐  
    Once a Day or More ☐  
    Once a Week ☐  
    Once a Month ☐  
    Occasionally ☐  
    Special Occasions (*Eid*) ☐  
    Rarely ☐  
    Never ☐

Q14. How Frequently Do You Visit the Mosque?    Once a Day or More ☐  
    Once a Week ☐  
    Once a Month ☐  
    Occasionally ☐  
    Special Occasions (*Eid*) ☐  
    Rarely ☐  
    Never ☐

Q15. Have You Read the Qur'an?    Yes ☐    No ☐

Q16. How Often Do You Read the Qur'an?    Once a Day or More ☐  
    Once a Week ☐  
    Once a Month ☐  
    Occasionally ☐  
    Special Occasions (*Ramadan*) ☐  
    Rarely ☐  
    Never ☐

Q17. Do You Fast in *Ramadan*?    Yes ☐    No ☐

Q18. Have You Done *Hajj*?    Yes ☐    No ☐

Q19. Have You Done Umrah?    Yes ☐    No ☐

Q20. Do You Give *Zakah*?  
(Obligatory Charity)

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

Q21. Do You Give *Sadaqa*?  
(Non-Obligatory Charity)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q22. Are You Involved in an Islamic Organisation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q23. Do You Ever Refer to *Hadith*?

Yes ☐ (Go to A)

No ☐ (Go to B)

Never ☐ (Go to C)

A) Matters Relating to: \_\_\_\_\_

B) No, Because: \_\_\_\_\_

C) Never, Because: \_\_\_\_\_

Q24. The Importance of an Islamic Lifestyle?

Very Important ☐

Important ☐

Don't Know ☐

Not Important ☐

Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

⌘ SECTION III - FAMILY LIFE (PLEASE TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE)

Q25. Marital Status:

Single ☐

In a Relationship ☐

Engaged ☐

Married ☐

Divorced ☐

Separated ☐

Widowed ☐

\_\_\_\_ Months/Years

\_\_\_\_ Months/Years

\_\_\_\_ Months/Years

\_\_\_\_ Months/Years

Q26. Who is the Main Income Earner in Your Family? \_\_\_\_\_ [&] \_\_\_\_\_

Q27. Please Number the Following Statements In Order of Importance (1 Being the Most Important and 5 Being the Least Important)

a) I Expect[ed] my Husband to: Provide for me and the Children Financially ☐

Provide Islamic Teaching (Spiritual & Moral) for Children ☐

Assist me in Household Chores ☐

Be the Guide and Guardian of the Family ☐

Provide Emotional Support ☐

Other Please State: \_\_\_\_\_

b) I Expect[ed] my Wife to: Look After and Rear Children ☐

Look After and Maintain the House ☐

Be Obedient to Me ☐

Be a Source of Comfort and Solace ☐

Share Financial Responsibilities

Other Please State: \_\_\_\_\_

Q28. Who Does the Housework? (washing, cooking, ironing, cleaning) \_\_\_\_\_ [&] \_\_\_\_\_

Q29. Do You Have Any Children?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐ (Go to Next Question)

Q29a. How Many Children Do You Have?    One ☐    Two ☐    Three ☐  
Four ☐    Five ☐    Six ☐

Q29b. How Many Are:    Boy[s] \_\_\_\_    Girl[s] \_\_\_\_

Q30. Do You Live in a Nuclear/Extended Family Household?    Nuclear ☐  
Extended ☐

Q31. Which Other Members Stay With You?    Father-in-law ☐  
Mother-in-law ☐  
Brother-in-law ☐  
Sister-in-law ☐  
Nieces/Nephews ☐  
Others Please State: \_\_\_\_\_

THE END.

---

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS STUDY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.  
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

# APPENDIX D

## MALE HOMOSEXUAL PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Asifa Siraj, I am a student at the University of Glasgow. I am conducting research for a PhD in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. The purpose of this research is to examine sexuality and masculinity from a Muslim homosexual perspective. In order to examine this I need the following information from you. I would be grateful if you could fill out the questions below in order for me to complete this research. All information obtained will be treated with the strictest of confidentiality and will not be used for any purpose other than for the research of my thesis. Thank You.

### SECTION I: PERSONAL DETAILS

Q1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐ Q2. Date of Birth: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_ Q3. Country of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Q4. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Q5. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Q6. Lived in the UK/England For: All My Life ☐  
Years ☐  
Months ☐

Q7. Ethnic Origin: Black-African ☐ Please Specify Country \_\_\_\_\_  
Black-Other ☐ Please Specify Country \_\_\_\_\_  
Pakistani ☐  
Indian ☐  
Arab ☐ Please Specify Country \_\_\_\_\_  
White European ☐ Please Specify Country \_\_\_\_\_  
White Other ☐ Please Specify Country \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

Q8. Would You Describe Yourself by Your: Nationality ☐  
Ethnicity ☐  
Race ☐  
Sexuality ☐  
Gender ☐  
Religion ☐  
Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

Q9. Level of Education: School ☐  
College Diploma ☐  
University Degree ☐  
B.A./BSc in \_\_\_\_\_  
Post-Graduate Degree ☐  
M.A./MSc in \_\_\_\_\_  
PhD in \_\_\_\_\_

Other Please State: \_\_\_\_\_

Q10. Occupation: School/College/University Student ☐  
Employed ☐  
Academic ☐  
Currently Unemployed ☐  
Housewife/Houschusband ☐  
Retired ☐  
Other Please State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Specific Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Q11. Your Present Living Arrangement? Live Alone ☐  
Share Housing ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

Q12. I Share With: My Lover/Partner ☐  
My Friend[s] ☐  
My Relative[s] ☐ Specify Which Relative \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION II ISLAMIC IMPORTANCE

Q13. Importance of Religion: Very Important ☐ Q14. Are You: Sunni ☐  
Fairly Important ☐ Shi'a ☐  
Not Important ☐ Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

Q15. Would You Say You Were a: Practising Muslim ☐  
Non-Practising Muslim ☐

Q16. How Frequently Do You Pray?: Once a Day or More ☐  
Once a Week ☐  
Once a Month ☐  
Occasionally ☐  
Special Occasions (*Eid*) ☐  
Rarely ☐

Q17. How Frequently Do You Visit the Mosque?: Once a Day or More ☐  
Once a Week ☐  
Once a Month ☐  
Occasionally ☐  
Special Occasions (*Eid*) ☐  
Rarely ☐

Q18. Have You Read the Qur'an? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q19. How Often Do You Read the Qur'an?: Once a Day or More ☐  
Once a Week ☐  
Once a Month ☐  
Occasionally ☐



Special Occasions (*Ramadan*) ☐  
Rarely ☐

Q20. Do You Fast in the Month of *Ramadan*? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q21. Have You Done *Hajj*? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q22. Have You Done *Umrah*? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q23. Do You Give *Zakat*? Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐  
(Obligatory Charity)

Q24. Do You Give *Sadaqa*? Yes ☐ No ☐  
(Non Obligatory Charity)

Q25. Are You Involved in an Islamic Organisation? Yes ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
No ☐

Q25b. Which Islamic Organisation Are you a Part of: \_\_\_\_\_

Q26. Do You Ever Refer to a *Hadith*? Yes ☐ (Go to A)  
No ☐ (Go to B)  
Never ☐ (Go to C)

A) Matters Relating To: \_\_\_\_\_  
B) No, Because: \_\_\_\_\_  
C) Never, Because: \_\_\_\_\_

Q27. Importance of an Islamic Lifestyle? Very Important ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
Important ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
Don't know ☐  
Not Important ☐  
Other Please State \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION III: IDENTITY (PLEASE TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE)

Q28. How Important is Your Religion In Your Social Identity?

Very Important ☐ Fairly Important ☐ Important ☐ Not Important ☐

Q29. How Important is Your Sexuality In Your Social Identity?

Very Important ☐ Fairly Important ☐ Important ☐ Not Important ☐

### SECTION IV: Sexuality (Please Tick Where Appropriate)

Q30. Would you Define Homosexuality? As a total way of life ☐  
As sexual preference ☐

As an alternative way of life

☐

Q31. Have You Ever Been Involved in a Same-Sex Relationship? Yes ☐  
No ☐

Q32. How Old Were You When You Had Your First Homosexual Relationship? \_\_\_\_\_ Years Old.

Q33. Using The Scale Below Please Rate Yourself On The Basis Of Your Sexual History:

Exclusively Heterosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Largely Heterosexual but with Incidental Homosexual History	<input type="checkbox"/>
Largely Heterosexual but with Distinct Homosexual History	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equally Heterosexual and Homosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Largely Homosexual but with Incidental Heterosexual History	<input type="checkbox"/>
Largely Homosexual but with Distinct Heterosexual History	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exclusively Homosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Without Either Heterosexual or Homosexual History	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q34. Your Present Relationship Status:

Committed Relationship with a Man	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separated from a Relationship with a Man	<input type="checkbox"/>
/Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a Heterosexual Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separated/Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widowed in a Heterosexual Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Please State _____	

Q35a. Do You Belong To Any Homosexual Organisation[s]? Yes ☐  
No ☐

Q35b. Which Homosexual Organisation[s] Are you a Part of: \_\_\_\_\_

Q36. How Would You Describe Your Sexual Preference?:

Gay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heterosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bi-Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Please State _____	

Q37. Is Being A Homosexual/Lesbian Is Your Choice?

Entirely My Choice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mostly My Choice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partly My Choice	<input type="checkbox"/>
My Choice At All	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Please State _____	

Q38. Are You Currently Celibate? Yes ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
No ☐

Q39. How Long Have You Been Celibate For? \_\_\_\_\_ Month[s] and/or \_\_\_\_\_ Year[s]

SECTION V: FAMILY

Q40. How Many Siblings Do You Have? \_\_\_\_\_ Sister[s] \_\_\_\_\_ Brother[s]

Q41. Have You Ever Been Married? Yes ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
No ☐

Q42. Do You Have Any Children?      Yes ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
No ☐

Q43. If Yes, How Many Children Have You Had?: \_\_\_\_\_ Daughter[s] \_\_\_\_\_ Son[s]

Q45. What People Know That You Are A Homosexual?

	Most	Some	None
Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Co-Workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Please State _____			

Q46. Are Any Other Family Members Homosexuals? Yes ☐ (Go To Next Question)  
No ☐  
Don't Know ☐

Q47. If Yes, Please Specify Which Member? (for e.g. Brother, Aunt etc.)

THE END.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS STUDY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME  
IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have adopted the standard transliteration used in academic literature on Islam. More specifically, I have followed Roald's (2001) method of transliteration.

<i>Adhab</i>	Etiquettes and manners.
<i>Adhan</i>	The call for daily prayers.
<i>Al-Baqarah</i>	The longest <i>ayat</i> in the Qur'an.
<i>Al-Fatiha</i>	The 'Opening' or 'Beginning'. It is the First Verse of the Qur'an.
<i>Allah</i>	God in Arabic. No gender is attributed to Allah.
<i>Ahadith</i>	Plural for <i>hadith</i> .
<i>Al-Hamdu'lillah</i>	Praise be to Allah.
<i>Arkān al-Islām</i>	Pillars of Islam. There are five pillars of Islam: 1) faith, 2) prayer, 3) compulsory payment, 4) fasting, and 5) Pilgrimage.
<i>Asr</i>	Afternoon prayer (mid-afternoon and before sunset).
<i>Awliyā</i>	Protector, supporter, helper.
<i>Awra</i>	The area of the body that must be covered.
<i>Ayat</i>	Verse/signs. The term literally means 'signs' of God, each <i>ayah</i> is a sign from God where He gives numerous signs, such as His power, His creation (earth, heavens etc.) and the consequences of human actions (hell and heaven) (pl. <i>Ayah</i> ).
<i>Da'if</i>	Weak narrated <i>hadith</i> .
<i>Dars</i>	Religion lesson.
<i>Dawa</i>	Missionary work.
<i>Dīn</i>	Faith.
<i>Dhikr</i>	Remembrance of Allah.
<i>Du'a</i>	Supplication/Invocation.
<i>Ehsaan</i>	Favour.
<i>Eid al-Adha</i>	Means festivity, a celebration in Arabic. The festival or the feast of the sacrifice. Marks the end of the Hajj.
<i>Eid al-Fitr</i>	A three-day religious festival, marking the end of Ramadan, takes place on the 10th month of the Islamic calendar.
<i>Faddala</i>	To be preferred, benevolent.
<i>Fajr</i>	'The Dawn'. The morning and first obligatory prayer (between first light of dawn and just before sunrise).
<i>Fard</i>	An act which is obligatory upon Muslims.
<i>Farj</i>	Genitalia and nakedness, or between the navel and the knee.
<i>Fatwā</i>	A legal verdict given on a religious basis. The sources upon which a <i>fatwa</i> is based are the Holy Qur'an and authentic <i>hadith</i> .
<i>Fiqh</i>	Muslim jurisprudence.
<i>Fitna</i>	This term has various meanings, it can mean oppression or tumult, as in <i>Surah Al-Baqara</i> (2:193), Trial or punishment, as in <i>Surah Al-Maidah</i> (5:74) and Trial or temptation, as in <i>Surah Al-Anfal</i> (8:28).
<i>Furqan</i>	'The Criterion', this term is another name of the Holy Qur'an.
<i>Hadd</i>	The punishment prescribed by Allah in the Qur'an or the <i>Sunnah</i> (pl. <i>hudud</i> ).
<i>Hajj</i>	Pilgrimage to <i>Makkah</i> and <i>Medina</i> is the final and fifth pillar of Islam.
<i>Halāl</i>	Lawful as defined by Allah.
<i>Harām</i>	Unlawful.
<i>Hayā</i>	Self respect, modesty.
<i>Hijab</i>	Headscarf/Veil.
<i>Hikma</i>	Wisdom.
<i>Haq</i>	Truth.

<i>Ibādāt</i>	Acts of worship (praying, supplication, fasting and so on).
<i>Idda</i>	A specified period of waiting after divorce and before re-marriage.
<i>Ijmā</i>	Consensus over religious matters.
<i>Ijtihād</i>	Interpretation or striving Intellectually, individual reasoning exercising personal judgment based on the Qur'an and the <i>hadith</i> .
<i>Imam</i>	A person (male) who leads the prayer.
<i>Iman</i>	Having faith and believing in Allah, Allah's Existence, belief in the angels, the revealed Books, the Prophets, in the Day of Judgment.
<i>Insh'allah</i>	Allah willing.
<i>Islam</i>	Submission to the will of Allah.
<i>Isnād</i>	Narrator of chain of a <i>hadith</i> .
<i>Izzat</i>	Respect.
<i>Jāhiliya</i>	Period of Ignorance before the advent of Islam.
<i>Jihad</i>	<i>Jihad</i> is divided into <i>Jihad an-Nafs</i> : struggling against one's own self, desires and <i>Jihad Akbar</i> - Physically fighting in the cause of Allah.
<i>Jilbab</i>	A long, loose over garment, which covers the entire body.
<i>Jum'a Salah</i>	Friday prayers.
<i>Kafir</i>	Unbeliever. A person who rejects Allah and Allah's Prophets (pl. <i>Kuffar</i> ).
<i>Khalāqa</i>	The beginning or initiation of creation.
<i>Khalīf</i>	The term <i>Khalīf</i> means 'to succeed', and a <i>Khalīfa</i> is the 'Successor of the Prophet'. More specifically it refers to the four <i>Khulafa</i> (pl.) or 'the rightly-guided <i>Khulafa</i> ' who were: Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abu Talib.
<i>Khimār</i>	Form of veil that covers the hair, chest and back.
<i>Khul</i>	A form of divorce. When a wife leaves her husband after returns part or all of her dowry.
<i>Khutba</i>	Sermon. Usually given by the <i>Imam</i> on the Friday prayer ( <i>Juma</i> ).
<i>Madhhab</i>	School of law.
<i>Maghrib</i>	Sunset. The fourth compulsory Prayer of the day (between just after sunset and before the stars appear in the sky).
<i>Mahr</i>	Dowry given by a husband to the wife on marriage.
<i>Mahram</i>	A Man whom a woman can not marry due to the closeness of her relationship (father, brother, uncle, son and so on) Her husband is also her <i>mahram</i> .
<i>Makkah</i>	The Holiest city in Islam.
<i>Ma'rūf</i>	Well known, formally accepted.
<i>Masjid</i>	Urdu term for Mosque.
<i>Matn</i>	Content of <i>hadith</i> .
<i>Medina</i>	The second Holiest city in Islam.
<i>Mu'adhin</i>	The person who calls the <i>Adhan</i> .
<i>Mujahid</i>	Muslim fighter (one who fights for the cause of Allah).
<i>Muhammad</i>	The Prophet of Islam and The Final Messenger of Allah.
<i>Muslim</i>	One who submits to the will of Allah.
<i>Nafs</i>	Self, soul.
<i>Nikāb</i>	Face veil, covering the whole face leaving only the eyes exposed.
<i>Nikah</i>	Marriage.
<i>Nushūz</i>	Defiance, disobedience, disruption of marital harmony.
<i>PBUH</i>	Peace Be Upon Him'. Used in reference to all the Prophets in Islam in particular Prophet Muhammad.
<i>Qawwamūn</i>	Protection, provision and responsibility of men for women.
<i>Qiyās</i>	Reasoning by analogy.
<i>Qur'an</i>	'The Recitation'. The Holy Book of Islam, it has three meanings: Recitation, <i>al-Furqan</i> (discrimination between truth and falsehood) and <i>Umm al-Kitāb</i> (the

	mother of all books). The Qur'an is composed of 30 parts, containing 114 Chapters and 6,616 verses.
<i>R.A.</i>	<i>Radia'llah 'Anha</i> , May Allah be pleased with her.
<i>Ra'i</i>	Decisions based on one's individual judgement.
<i>Rajul</i>	Arabic term for man.
<i>Rak'ah</i>	A set of specific prayers repeated a certain number of times (pl. <i>Rak'at</i> ).
<i>Rasullallah</i>	Messenger/Prophet Muhammad.
<i>Ramadan</i>	The ninth and the holiest month of the Islamic calendar, the month of fasting from sunrise to sunset.
<i>Sadaqa</i>	Voluntary charity (given for the pleasure of Allah).
<i>Salah</i>	Prayer.
<i>Sahih</i>	<i>Hadith</i> with strong narration.
<i>Sabr</i>	Patience.
<i>Sawm</i>	Fasting in the month of <i>Ramadan</i> .
<i>Sawwara</i>	Form, shape or design referring to human creation.
<i>Seerah</i>	Prophet Muhammad's model of conduct.
<i>Shahadah</i>	Pronouncement that 'there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of God. <i>La Ilaha Illallah Muhammadur Rasullallah</i> ('The Pure Word'). This is the <i>Kalima at-tayyibah</i> or the <i>Kalima Shahada</i> .
<i>Shari'ah</i>	Islamic Law.
<i>Shia</i>	The second major sect in Islam.
<i>Sunnah</i>	Traditions and practices of the Prophet.
<i>Sunni</i>	The major sect in Islam.
<i>Surah</i>	Literally means 'a form'. A chapter in the Qur'an (pl. <i>suwar</i> ). There are 114 <i>suwar</i> in the Qur'an.
<i>SWT</i>	<i>Subhana Wa Ta'ala</i> , translated as 'May He be Glorified and Exalted'. This abbreviation is used to glorifying Allah.
<i>Qanitah</i>	Righteous, devout.
<i>Qur'an</i>	Muslim Holy Book.
<i>Tafsir</i>	Interpretation and commentary of Qur'anic text.
<i>Tajweed</i>	The rules of recitation of the Qur'an, usually means the improvement of the recitation of the Qur'an.
<i>Talaq</i>	The word commonly used for divorce.
<i>Taqwa</i>	Fear of Allah.
<i>Ulamā</i>	Religious scholars.
<i>Umm al-Kitāb</i>	Another name for the Qur'an, it means 'the Mother of all Books'
<i>Ummah</i>	Community or nation. Muslims form one integrated and unified community.
<i>Umrah</i>	A Pilgrimage to <i>Makkah</i> , but not during the Hajj period. It is also called "the Lesser Pilgrimage".
<i>Wudu</i>	Ablution to purify themselves for the prayer.
<i>Yaumil Qiyaama</i>	Day of Judgement.
<i>Zakah</i>	Obligatory welfare contribution/tax, paid once a year, every year.
<i>Zawj</i>	Mate, spouse
<i>Zeenah</i>	Beauty and ornaments.
<i>Zu'hur</i>	Noon prayers (between noon and mid-afternoon)}

## Bibliography

- Abd al 'Ati, H. (1998) *Islam in Focus*. Maryland: Amana Publications.
- Abu Dawud Ahadith, The Hadith Software Islamasoft Solutions. ([www.islamasoft.co.uk](http://www.islamasoft.co.uk)).
- Abu-Lughod, L. (1986) *Veiled Sentiments*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Abu Odeh, L. (1993) 'Post-Colonial Feminism And The Veil: Thinking The Difference'. *Feminist Review*, 43: 26-37.
- Adeney, B. T. (1995) *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Afshar, H., Aitken, R., & Franks, M. (2005) 'Feminisms, Islamophobia and Identities'. *Political Studies*, 53 (2): 262-283.
- Ahlander, N. R. & Bahr, K. S. (1995) 'Beyond Drudgery, Power, and Equity: Toward an Expanded Discourse on the Moral Dimensions of Housework in Families'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57 (1): 54-68.
- Ahmed, A. S. (2002) (Rev. Ed.) *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Ahmed, A. (1993) *Living Islam: From Samarkand to Stornoway*. BBC Books.
- Ahmed, L. (1992) *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press.
- Al-Ali, N. (2002) 'Gender Relations, Transnational Ties and Rituals Among Bosnian Refugees'. *Global Networks*, 2 (3): 249-262.
- Al'Alwani, T. J., & Khalil, I. D. (1991) *The Qur'an and the Sunna: The Time-Space Factor*. Occasional Papers No. 17. Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Al-Azmeh, A. (1993) *Islams and Modernities*. London: Verso.
- Al-Hibri, A. (1982) 'A Study of Islamic Herstory: Or How Did We ever Get into this Mess?', *Women and Islam: Women's Studies International Forum Magazines*, 5: (2).
- al-Jibaly, M. (2000) *The Muslim Family Volume 3: The Fragile Vessels: Rights & Obligations Between Spouses in Islaam*. USA, Texas: Al-Kitaab & as-Sunnah Publishing.
- al-Khattab, H. (1997) *Bent Rib: A Journey Through Women's Issues in Islam*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers.
- Alexander, C. E. (2000) *The Asian Gang: Ethnicity, Identity, Masculinity*. Oxford, New York: Berg Publishers.
- Alexander, C. (1998) 'Re-imagining the Muslim Community'. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 11 Issue 4: 39-450.
- Ali, A. Y., The English Translation Of The Holy Qur'an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Al-Qur'an Database. Date Accessed: May 6, 2004, from <http://web.umar.edu/~msaumr/reference/quran.html>

- Ali, S. (2005) 'Why Here, Why Now? Young Muslim Women Wearing Hijab'. *The Muslim World*, 95 (4): 515-530.
- Amin, Q. (2000) *The Liberation of Women and the New Woman: Two Documents in the History of Egyptian Feminism*, Translated by Samiha Sidhom Peterson. Cairo: The American University Press.
- Ansari, U. Z. 'Dr. Amina Wadud and the Progressive Muslims: Some Reflections on Woman-Led Prayer'. Date Accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> September 2005 [[http://www.livingislam.org/k/awpm\\_e.html](http://www.livingislam.org/k/awpm_e.html)]
- Anwar, M. (1998) *Between Cultures: Continuity and Change in the Lives of Young Asians*. London: Routledge.
- Arendell, T. (1999) Mothering and Motherhood: A Decade Review. Working Paper No. 3. Date Accessed: April 5<sup>th</sup> 2004 [http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/wfnetwork/berkeley/papers/3.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/wfnetwork/berkeley/papers/3.pdf)
- Atasoy, Y. (2006) 'Governing Women's Morality A Study of Islamic Veiling in Canada'. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9 (2): 203-221.
- Badawi, J. (1995) *Gender Equity in Islam: Basic Principles*. Indiana: American Trust Publications.
- Badawi, J. A. (1992) 'Women in Islam' in Ahmad, K. (Ed.) *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*. Markfield, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation.
- Badawi, J. A. (1982) *From The Muslim Woman's Dress According to the Qur'an and Sunnah*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd.
- Badawi, J., The Muslim Woman's Dress: According to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Date Accessed: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2004. <http://ukim.org/dawah/muslim%20Woman's%20Dress.pdf>.
- Badinter, E. (1995) *XY on Masculine Identity*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Badri, H. (2004) 'Islamic Identity Re-Covered: Muslim Women After September 11th'. *Culture and Religion*, 5 (3): 321-338.
- Badran, M. (2006) 'Islamic Feminism Revisited'. Countercurrents.org. Date Accessed: Date Accessed: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2005: [<http://www.countercurrents.org/gen-badran100206.htm>]
- Bailey, L. (2001) 'Gender Shows: First-Time Mothers And Embodied Selves'. *Gender & Society*, 15 (1): 110-129.
- Balka, C., Rose, A. (Eds.) (1991) *Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian or Gay and Jewish*. Beacon Press.
- Barlas, A. (2004) Towards a Theory of Gender Equality in Muslim Societies. CSID Annual Conference, Washington, D.C. Date Accessed: August 13<sup>th</sup> 2004. [http://www.ithaca.edu/faculty/abarlas/talks/20040529\\_CSID.pdf](http://www.ithaca.edu/faculty/abarlas/talks/20040529_CSID.pdf)
- Barlas, A. (2002) *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Barrett, D. C. (2000) 'Masculinity Among Working-Class Gay Males' in Nardi, P. (Ed.) *Gay Masculinities: Research on Men and Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.



- Bartky, S. L. (1990) *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. London: Routledge.
- Bartky, S. L. (1988) 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power' in Quinby, L. & Diamond, I. (Eds.) *Feminism and Foucault: Paths of Resistance*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Bassett, R. L., Baldwin, D., Tammara, J., Mackmer, D., Mundig, C., Wareing, A. & Tschorke, D. (2002) 'Reconsidering Intrinsic Religion as a Source of Universal Compassion'. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 30 (2): 131-143.
- Batson, C. D., Eidelman, S. H., Higley, S. L., & Russel, S. A. (2001) "And Who is my Neighbor?" II: Quest Religion as a Source of Universal Compassion'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40 (1): 39-50.
- Batson, C. D., Floyd, R. B., Meyer, J. M., & Winner, A. L. (1999) "And Who is my Neighbor?": Intrinsic Religion as a Source of Universal Compassion'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 38 (4): 445-457.
- Beckerlegge, G. (Ed.) (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (2001) *World Religions Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Benin, M. H. & Agostinelli, J. (1988) 'Husbands' and Wives' Satisfaction with the Division of Labor (in Marital Happiness and Satisfaction)'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50 (2): 349-361.
- Berardo, D. H., Constance, S. L. & Leslie, G. R. (1987) 'A Residue of Tradition: Jobs, Careers, and Spouses' Time in Housework'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 49 (2): 381-390.
- Bernstein, M. (2004) Paths to Homophobia. Sexuality Research & Social Policy. *Journal of NSRC*, 1 (2): 44-51. Date Accessed: November 5, 2003: [http://nsrc.sfsu.edu/Resource/v1n2\\_bernstein\\_DB\\_102504.pdf](http://nsrc.sfsu.edu/Resource/v1n2_bernstein_DB_102504.pdf)
- Bhopal, K. (1997) *Gender, Race and Patriarchy: A Study of South Asian Women*. Ashgate, Aldershot.
- Bird, S. R. (1996) 'Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity'. *Gender & Society*, 10 (2): 120-132.
- Blair, S. L. & Johnson, M. P. (1992) 'Wives' Perceptions of the Fairness of the Division of Household Labor: The Intersection of Housework and Ideology'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54 (3): 570-581.
- Blanchford, G. (1981) 'Male Dominance and the Gay World' in Plummer, K., Bloch, M. and Parry, J. (Eds.) (1982) *Death and the Regeneration of Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bohan, J. S. (1996) *Psychology and Sexual Orientation: Coming to Terms*. London: Routledge.
- Borland, K., (1991) 'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research' in Gluck, S. B. & Patai, D. (Eds.) *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York: Routledge.
- Boswell, J. (1980) *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Bouhdiba, A. (1998) *Sexuality in Islam* (Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan). London: Saqi Books.
- Boyd, E. R. (2002) "'Being There' Mothers Who Stay Home, Gender and Time'. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 25 (4): 463-470.
- Boyd, S. B., Merle Longwood, W. & Muesse, M. W. (Eds.) (1996) *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Brandth, B. & Kvande E. (1998) Masculinity and Childcare: The Reconstruction of Fathering. *Sociology Review*, 46 (2): 293-313.
- Brannon, R. (1976) 'The Male Sex Role: Our Culture's Blueprint of Manhood, and What it's Done for us Lately' in David, D. & Brannon, R. (Eds.) *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Breitenbach, Brown & Myers (1998) Understanding Women In Scotland. *Feminist Review*, No. 58: 44-65.
- Brines, J. (1994) 'Economic Dependency, Gender, and the Division of Labor at Home'. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 100 (3): 652-688.
- Brittan, A. (1989) *Masculinity and Power*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Brod, H. & Kaufman, M. (1994) *Theorizing Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Brod, H., (1994) 'Some Thoughts on Some Histories of Some Masculinities: Jews and Other Others' in Brod, H. & Kaufman, M. (Eds.) *Theorizing Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Brownmiller, S. (1986) *Femininity*. London: Paladin Grafton Books.
- Brownmiller, S. (1975) *Against Our Will, Men, Women and Rape*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bukhari Ahadith, The Hadith Software Islamasoft Solutions. ([www.islamasoft.co.uk](http://www.islamasoft.co.uk)).
- Butler, J. (1997) 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory' in Conboy, K., Medina, N., & Stanbury, S. (Eds.) *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Cameron, F. (2002) 'The Islamic Factor in the European Union's Foreign Policy' in Hunter, S. T. (Ed.) *Islam, Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural and Political Landscape*. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC.
- Card, C., (2003) *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir* (Cambridge Companions to Philosophy). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Carrigan, T., Connell, B., & Lee, J. (1987), 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity' in H. Brod (Ed.) *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*. Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin Inc.  
Census Data: [www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001). A profile of Glasgow is available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/08142443/24440>
- Cesari, J. (2003) 'Muslim Minorities in the West: The Silent Revolution' in Esposito, J. & Burgat, F. (Ed.). *Modernizing Islam: Religion in the Public Sphere in the Middle East and in Europe*. Rutgers University Press.
- Charles, N. (2002) *Gender in Modern Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chodorow, N. (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ciabattari, T. (2001) 'Changes in Men's Conservative Gender Ideologies: Cohort and Period Influences'. *Gender & Society*, 15 (4): 574-591.
- Cicone, M. V., & Ruble, D. N., (1978) 'Beliefs About Males'. *Journal of Social Issues*, 34 (1): 5-16.
- Clegg, C. & Rosie, M. (2005) Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Edinburgh, Scottish Executive Social Research.  
[<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/08142443/24440>]
- Cliff, D. (1993) 'Under the Wife's Feet: Renegotiating the Domestic Division of Labour in Early Retirement'. *Sociology Review*, 41 (1): 30-53.
- Cohen, R. (1997) *Global Diasporas*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Cohen, T. F. (2001) *Men and Masculinity: A Text Reader*. California: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
- Combs-Schilling, M. E. (1989) *Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Comstock, G. D. (1996) *Unrepentant, Self-Affirming, Practising: Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay People Within Organized Religion*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.
- Comstock, G. D. (1993) *Gay Theology Without Apology*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2002) *Gender*. Oxford, UK: Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1995) *Masculinities*. Oxford, UK: Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1992) 'A Very Straight Gay: Masculinity, Homosexual Experience, and the Dynamics of Gender'. *American Sociological Review*, 57 (6): 735-751.
- Connell, R. W. (1987) *Gender and Power*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Cornwall, A. (1998) 'Gender, Participation and the Politics of Difference' in Guijt, I. & Shah, M. K. (Eds.) *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Cornwall, A. (1997) 'Men, Masculinity and 'Gender in Development''. *Gender and Development*, 5 (2): 8-13.

- Cornwall, A. & Lindisfarne, N. (Eds.) (1994) *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*. London: Routledge.
- Cornwall, A., & Lindisfarne, N. (1994) 'Dislocating Masculinity: Gender, Power and Anthropology' in Cornwall, A. & Lindisfarne N. (Eds.) *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*. London: Routledge.
- Corrigan, J., Denny, F., Eire, C., & Jaffee, M. (Eds.) (1998) *Jews, Christians, Muslims: A Comparative Introduction to Monotheistic Religions*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- D'Agostino, M. (2003) 'Muslim Personhood: Translation, Transnationalism and Islamic Religious Education among Muslims in New York City'. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 23 (2): 285-294.
- Da Costa, Y. (2002) *The Honor of Women in Islam (Scholars in Islam Series)*. Washington: Islamic Supreme Council of America.
- Dahl, T. S. (1997) *The Muslim Family: A Study of Women's Rights in Islam*. Translated from the Norwegian by Ronald Walford. Norway: Scandinavian University Press.
- DeLamater, J. (1981) 'The Social Control of Sexuality'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 7: 263-290.
- Delaney, C. (1995) 'Untangling the Meaning of Hair in Turkish Society' in Eilberg-Schwartz, H., & Doniger, W. (Eds.) *Off With Her Head!: Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Delaney, J., Lupton, M. J. & Toth, E. (1988) *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Demo, D. H. & Acock, A. C. (1993) 'Family Diversity and the Division of Domestic Labor: How Much Have Things Really Changed?'. *Family Relations*, 42 (3): 323-331.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S. (Eds.) (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989) *Interpretive Interactionism*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- deVaus D., & McAllister, I. (1987) 'Gender Differences in Religion: A Test of the Structural Location Theory'. *American Sociology Review*, 52: 472-481.
- Doi, A. R. I. (1989) *Woman in Shari'ah, Islamic Law*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd.
- Doi, A. R. I. (1984) *Shari'ah: The Islamic Law*. London: Ta Ha Publishers Ltd.
- Dossani, S. (1997) 'Being Muslim and Gay' in Henking, S. E., & Comstock, G. D. (Eds.) *Que(e)rying Religious Studies: A Critical Anthology*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group - Academi.
- Dunbar, J., Brown, M., & Amoroso, D. M. (1973) Some Correlates of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 89: 271-279.
- Duran, K. (1993) 'Homosexuality in Islam' in Swidler, A. (Ed.) *Homosexuality and World Religions*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International.

- Dwyer, C. (1999) 'Veiled Meanings: Young British Muslim Women and the Negotiation of Differences'. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 6 (1): 5-26.
- Edley, N. & Wetherell, M. (1996) 'Masculinity, Power and Identity' in Mac an Ghaill, M. (Ed.) *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Edwards, T. (1994) *Erotics & Politics: Gay Male Sexuality, Masculinity and Feminism*. Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities 5. London: Routledge.
- El-Awa, M. S. (1982) *Punishment in Islamic Law: A Comparative Study*. Indiana, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications.
- Elfawal, M. A. (2003) 'Shari'ah Law and the Judicial System' in Payne-James, J., Busuttil, A. & Smock, W. (Eds.) (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.) *Forensic Medicine: Clinical and Pathological Aspects*. London: Greenwich Medical Media Ltd.
- El Guindi, F. (1999) *Vell: Modesty, Privacy, and Resistance*. Oxford: Berg.
- El Guindi, F. (1995) 'Hijab' in Esposito, J. L. (Ed.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 2. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, A. L. & Mitchell, R. W. (2000) 'Sexual Orientation' in Szuchman, L. T. & Muscarella, F. (Eds.) *Psychological Perspectives on Human Sexuality*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Ellison, C. G. & Bartkowski, J. P. (2002) Conservative Protestantism and the Division of Household Labor Among Married Couples. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23 (8): 950-985.
- Ellison, M. M. (1993) 'Homosexuality and Protestantism' in Swidler, A. (Ed.) *Homosexuality and World Religions*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International.
- Emerson, M. O. (1996) 'Through Tinted Glasses: Religion World View, and Abortion Attitudes'. *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, 35 (1): 41-55.
- Engineer, A. A. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (2004) *The Rights of Women in Islam*. Elgin, Illinois: New Dawn Press Group.
- Engineer, A. A. (2004) 'Islam And Sexual Equality'. Date Accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2004: [<http://www.countercurrents.org/engineer-140104.htm>]
- Engineer, A. A. (1999) *The Quran, Women and Modern Society: The Controversial Subject of Women's Rights*. Malaysia: Synergy Books International.
- Epstein, D., & Johnson, R. (1994) 'On the Straight and Narrow: The Heterosexual Presumption, Homophobias and Schools' in Epstein, D. (Ed.) *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities In Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Esposito, J. L., Fasching, D., & Lewis, T. T. (2002) *World Religions Today*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Esposito, J. L. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) (1998) *Islam: The Straight Path*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Esposito, J. L. (Expanded Ed.) (1991) *Islam: The Straight Path*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Etter-Lewis, G. (1991) 'Black Women's Life Stories: Reclaiming Self in Narrative Texts' in Patai, D., & Gluck, S. H. (Eds.) *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. London: Routledge.
- Evans, M. (1985) *Simone de Beauvoir: Feminist Mandarin*. New York: Tavistock.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000) *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fiqh-us-Sunnah. Ahadith, The Hadith Software Islamasoft Solutions. ([www.islamasoft.co.uk](http://www.islamasoft.co.uk)).
- Firestone, S. (1972) *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. London: Paladin.
- Forcey, L. R. (1994) 'Feminist Perspectives on Mothering and Peace' in Glenn, E. N., Chang, G., & Forcey, L. R. (Eds.), *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Fortier, A. (1998) 'Gender, Ethnicity and Fieldwork: A Case Study' in Seale, C. (Ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Foucault, M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1*, Translated by Robert Hurley, New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality. Vol.1: The Will To Knowledge*, Translated by Robert Hurley. London: Allen Lane.
- Franks, M. (2000) 'Crossing the Borders of Whiteness? White Muslim Women Who Wear the Hijab in Britain Today'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23 (5): 917-929.
- French, M. (1985) *Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals*. London: Abacus.
- Frosh, S. (1995) 'Unpacking Masculinity: From Rationality to Fragmentation' in Burck, C. & Speed, B. (Eds.) *Gender Power, and Relationship*. London: Routledge.
- Frosh, S., Phoenix, A. & Pattman, R. (2002) *Young Masculinities: Understanding Boys in Contemporary Society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Gardner, K. (1995) *Global Migrants, Local Lives: Travel and Transformation in Rural Bangladesh*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Gardner, K., & Shukur, A. (1994) 'I'm Bengali, I'm Asian, and I'm Living Here' in Ballard, R. (Ed.) *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Gerholm, L. (2003) 'Overcoming Temptation: On Masculinity and Sexuality Among Muslims in Stockholm'. *Global Networks*, 3 (3): 401-416.
- Gibb, C. & Rothenberg, C. (2000) 'Believing Women: Harari and Palestinian Women at Home and in the Canadian Diaspora'. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 20 (2): 243-259
- Gibb, C. (1998) 'Religious Identification in Transnational Contexts: Being and Becoming Muslim in Ethiopia and Canada'. *Diaspora*, 7 (2): 247-267.

- Gillmore, D. D. (1990) *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Glen, E. N. (1994) 'Social Constructions of Mothering: A Thematic Overview' in Glen, E. N., Chang, G., & Forcey, L. R. (Eds.), *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Glover, D. & Kaplan, C. (2000) *Genders*. London: Routledge.
- Goldberg, S. (1993) *Why Men Rule: A Theory of Male Dominance*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing.
- Greenstein, T. N. (1996) 'Husbands' Participation in Domestic Labor: Interactive Effects of Wives' and Husbands' Gender Ideologies'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58 (3): 585-595.
- Gregson, N. and Lowe, M. (1993) 'Renegotiating the Domestic Division of Labour? A Study of Dual Career Households in North East and South East England'. *The Sociological Review*, 41 (3): 475-505.
- Haavio-Mannila, E. & Purhonen, S. (2001) Slimness and Self-rated Sexual Attractiveness: Comparisons of Men and Women in Two Cultures. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 38 (2): 102-110.
- Harris, I. M. (1995) *Messages Men Hear: Constructing Masculinities*. London: Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Hashim, I. (1999) 'Reconciling Islam and Feminism'. *Gender and Development*, 7 (1): 7-14.
- Hassan, R. (1999) 'An Islamic Perspective' in Lebacqz, K. (Ed.) *Sexuality: A Reader*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press.
- Hassan, R. (1996) 'Feminist Theology: The Challenges for Muslim Women', *Critique*, No. 9: 53-65.
- Hassan, R. (1987) 'Equal Before Allah?: Woman-Man Equality In The Islamic Tradition'. Date Accessed: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2004: [[http://www.globalwebpost.com/farooqm/study\\_res/islam/gender/equal\\_riffat.html](http://www.globalwebpost.com/farooqm/study_res/islam/gender/equal_riffat.html)]
- Heath, A. & McMahon, D. (2005) 'Social Mobility of Ethnic Minorities' in Loury, G. C., Modood, T. & Teles, S. M. (Eds.) *Ethnicity, Social Mobility and Public Policy: Comparing the US and UK*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Hearn, J. (1996) 'Is Masculinity Dead? A Critique of the Concept of Masculinity and Masculinities' in Mac an Ghaill, M. (Ed.) *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Herek, G. M. (2004) 'Beyond "Homophobia": Thinking About Sexual Prejudice and Stigma in the Twenty-First Century'. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 1 (2): 6-24.
- Herek, G. M. (2000) 'The Psychology of Sexual Prejudice. Current Directions'. *Psychological Science*, 9 (1): 19-22.
- Herek, G. M., & Capitano, J. P. (1995) 'Black Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men in the United States'. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 32 (2): 95-105.
- Herek, G. M. (1994) 'Assessing Heterosexuals' Attitudes Towards Lesbian and Gay Men: A Review of Empirical Research with the ATLG Scale in Green, B. & Herek, G. M. (Eds.) *Contemporary Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues in Psychology*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

- Herek, G. M. (1992) 'The Social-Context of Hate Crimes: Notes on Cultural Heterosexism' in Herek, G. M. & Berrill, K. T. (Eds.) *Hate Crimes: Confronting Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Herek, G. M. (1991) 'Stigma, Prejudice and Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men' in Gonsorlek, J. C. & Weinrich, J. D. (Eds.) *Homosexuality: Research Implications for Public Policy*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Herek, G. M. (1988) 'Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men: Correlates and Gender Differences'. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 25 (4): 451-477.
- Herek, G. M. (1984) 'Beyond "Homophobia": A Social Psychological Perspective on Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men'. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 10: 1-20.
- Hewitt, I. B. (1997) *What Does Islam Say?* London: The Muslim Education Trust.
- Hillery G. A. (1955) 'Definitions of Community; Areas of Agreement'. *Rural Sociology*, 20.
- Hochschild, A. (1989) *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books.
- Hoffman-Ladd, V. J. (1987) 'Polemics on the Modesty and Segregation of Women in Contemporary Egypt'. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19 (1): 23-50.
- Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Sharpe, S. & Thomson, R. (1994) 'Power and Desire: The Embodiment of Female Sexuality'. *Feminist Review*, 46: 21-38.
- Hood, J. C. (1986) 'The Provider Role: Its Meaning and Measurement'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48 (2): 349-359.
- Hoodfar, H. (1997) 'Return to the Veil', in Visvanathan, N. Duggan, L., Nisonoff L. & Wieggersma, N. (Eds.) *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*. London: Zed.
- Hopkins, P. D. (1996) 'Gender Treachery: Homophobia, Masculinity, and Threatened Identities' in May, L., Strikwerda, R., & Hopkins, P. D. (Eds.) *Rethinking Masculinity: Philosophical Explorations in Light of Feminism*. Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Hudson, W. W. & Ricketts, W. A. (1980) 'A Strategy for the Measurement of Homophobia'. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 5 (4): 357-372.
- Hunter, A. (1993) 'Same Door, Different Closet: A Heterosexual Sissy's Coming-out Party' in Wilkinson, S. & Kitzinger, C. (Eds.) (1993) *Heterosexuality: Feminism and Psychology: A Reader*. London: Sage Publications.
- Hutnik, N. (1985) 'Aspects of Identity in a Multi-Ethnic Society'. *New Community*, 12 (2): 298-309.
- Jackson, S. (1999) *Heterosexuality in Question*. London: Sage Publications.
- James, S. (2000) 'Feminism in Philosophy of Mind: The Question of Personal Identity' in Fricker, M. & Hornsby, J. (Eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jawad, H. A. (1998) *The Rights of Women in Islam: An Authentic Approach*. London: MacMillan Press.



- Johnsdotter, S. (2003) 'Somali Women in Western Exile: Reassessing Female Circumcision in the Light of Islamic Teachings'. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 23 (2): 361-73.
- Johnson, M. C. (2006) 'The Proof Is On My Palm': Debating Ethnicity, Islam And Ritual In A New African Diaspora'. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 36 (1): 50-77.
- Kabbani, S. M. H. & Bakhtiar, L. (1998) *Encyclopaedia of Muhammad's Women Companions and the Traditions They Related*. Chicago: ABC International Group, Inc.
- Kamal, A. A. (1986) *Everyday Fiqh* (Vol. 1). Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd.
- Kane, E. W. & Schippers, M. (1996) 'Men's and Women's Beliefs About Gender and Sexuality'. *Gender & Sexuality*, 10 (5): 650-665.
- Kaufman, M. (1987) 'The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence' in Kaufman, M. (Ed.) *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power and Change*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Kazi, M. U. (1995) *Family & Social Obligations in Islam*. Dallas, Texas: Al-Huda Publications.
- Keddie, N. R. (1990) 'The Past and Present of Muslim Women in the Muslim World'. *Journal of World History*, 1 (1): 77-108.
- Kent, L. (2001) 'Fighting/Abjection: Representing Fat Women' in Braziel, J. E., & LeBesco, K., (Ed.) *Bodies out of Bounds: Fatness and Transgression*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Kerfoot, S. & Whitehead, S. (1998) Whither Hegemonic Masculinity? *Paper Presented at Gendering the Millennium Conference, University of Dundee, 11-13 September 1998*.
- Khalidi, O. (2003) 'Mawlana Mawdudi and the Future Political Order in British India'. *The Muslim World*, Vol. 93.
- Khan, B. (1997) 'Not-So-Gay Life in Pakistani in the 1980s and 1990s' in Murray S. O. & W. Roscoe (Eds.) *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature*. New York: New York University Press.
- Khan, H. (2004) "Unite But Follow Me" The Tragic Comedy Of Muslim Representation. *Q News*, March 2004, No. 354: 24-25.
- Khan, S. M. (1993) *Why Two Women Witnesses??* Birmingham: IPCI (Islamic Propagation Centre International).
- Khuri, F. I. (2001) *The Body In Islamic Culture*. London: Saqi Books.
- Killian, C. (2003) 'The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair'. *Gender & Society*, 17 (4): 567-590.
- Kimmel, M. (2000) *The Gendered Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kimmel, M. (1994) 'Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity' in Brod, H., & Kaufman, M. (Eds.) *Theorizing Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.

- Kimmel, M. (1987) *Changing Men, New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*. New Park, California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Kite, M. E. & Whitley, B. E., Jr. (1998) 'Do Heterosexual Women and Men Differ in Their Attitudes Toward Homosexuality? A Conceptual and Methodological Analysis' in Herek, G. M. (Ed.) *Stigma and Sexual Orientation: Understanding Prejudice Against Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals. Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues, Vol. 4*. Thousand Oaks, California Sage Publications, Inc.
- Kitzinger, C., & Wilkinson, S., (2004) The Re-branding of Marriage: Why We Got Married Instead of Registering a Civil Partnership. *Feminism & Psychology*, 14 (1): 127-150.
- Kleinman, S. & Copp, M. (1993) *Emotions and Fieldwork*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Knott, K., & Khokher, S. (1993) Religious and Ethnic Identity Among Young Muslim Women in Bradford. *New Community*, 19: 593-610.
- Krieger, S. (1996) 'Beyond Subjectivity' in Lareau, A. & Shultz, J. (Eds.) *Journeys Through Ethnography: Realistic Accounts of Fieldwork*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview.
- Kroska, A. 1997) 'The Division of Labor in the Home: A Review and Reconceptualization'. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60 (4): 304-322.
- Küçükcan, T. (2004) 'The Making of Turkish-Muslim Diaspora in Britain: Religious Collective Identity in a Multicultural Public Sphere'. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 24 (2): 243-258.
- Kurtz, L. (1995) *Gods in the Global Village: The World's Religions in Sociological Perspective*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, Sage Publications Company.
- Kvale, S. (1996) *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Kynaston, C. (1996) The Everyday Exploitation of Women: Housework and the Patriarchal Mode of Production. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 19, (3): 221-237.
- Lang, J. (2000) *Struggling to Surrender: Some Impressions of an American Convert to Islam*. Maryland: Amana Publications.
- Leahy, T. (1994). Taking up a Position: Discourses of Femininity and Adolescence in the Context of Man/Girl Relationships. *Gender & Society*, 8 (1): 48-72.
- Leo, E. S. (2005) 'Islamic Female Sexuality and Gender in Modern Feminist Interpretation'. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 16 (2): 129-140.
- Leonard, M. (2001) Old Wine in New Bottles? Women Inside and Outside the Household. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 24 (1): 67-78.
- Letherby, G. (2002) 'Childless and Bereft?: Stereotypes And Realities In Relation to 'Voluntary' And 'Involuntary Childlessness' and 'Womanhood''. *Sociological Inquiry*, 72 (1): 7-20.
- Lincoln and Guba (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

- Lorber, J. (1994) *Paradoxes of Gender*. Yale University Press.
- Lucal, B. (1999) 'What It Means to be Gendered Me: Life on the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System'. *Gender & Society*, 13 (6): 781-797.
- MacCormack, C. P. (1980) 'Nature, Culture and Gender: A Critique' in MacCormack, C. P. & Strathern, M. (Eds.) *Nature, Culture and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacInnes, J. (1998) *End of Masculinity: The Confusion of Sexual Genesis and Sexual Difference in Modern Society*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Malik Muwatta Ahadith, The Hadith Software Islamasoft Solutions. ([www.islamasoft.co.uk](http://www.islamasoft.co.uk)).
- Maqsood, R. W. (1995) *Muslim Marriage Guide*. London: Quilliam Press Ltd.
- Maududi, A. A. (1972) (Translated & Edited by Al Ash'ari) *Purdah And the Status of Woman in Islam*. Lahore: Islamic Publications (PVT) Limited.
- McCracken, G. (1988) *The Long Interview: Qualitative Research Methods*. California: Sage Publications Ltd.
- McKie, L., Bowlby, S. & Gregory, S. (Eds.) (1999) *Gender, Power and the Household*. London: Macmillan press Ltd.
- McLean, R., Marini, I., & Pope, M. (2003) 'Racial Identity and Relationship Satisfaction in African American Gay Men'. *The Family Journal: Counselling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 11 (1) 13-22.
- McLoughlin, S. (2005) 'Mosques and the Public Space: Conflict and Cooperation in Bradford'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 6: 1045/1066.
- Mernissi, F. (1987) (Rev. Ed.) *Beyond The Veil: Male-Female Dynamics In Modern Muslim Society*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Mernissi, F. (1991) *The Veil and The Male Elite: a Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, (Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc.
- Messerschmidt, J. W. (1993): *Masculinities and Crime: Critique and Reconceptualization of Theory*. Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (2nd Ed.) (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks.
- Milkie, M.A. & Peltola, P. (1999) 'Playing All the Roles: Gender and the Work-Family Balancing Act'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61 (2): 476-490.
- Modood, T. (2003) 'Muslims and the Politics of Difference'. *Political Quarterly*, 74 (1).
- Modood, T. & Shiner, M. (2002) 'Help or Hindrance? Higher Education and the Route to Ethnic Equality'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23 (2): 209-232.
- Modood, T., Berthoud, R., Lakey, J., Nazroo, J., Smith, P., Virdee, S. & Beishon, S. (1997) *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

- Modood, T. (1990) 'British Asian Muslims and the Rushdie Affair'. *Political Quarterly*, 61: 143-160.
- Moghadam, V. M. (2004) 'Towards Gender Equality in The Arab/Middle East Region: Islam, Culture, And Feminist Activism' Occasional Paper.
- Mohammad, R. (1999) 'Marginalisation, Islamism and the Production of the 'Other's' 'Other''. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 6 (3): 221-240.
- Moon, D. (2002) 'Religious Views of Homosexuality' in Richardson, D. & Seidman, S. (Eds.) *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Morales, E. S. (1990) 'Ethnic Minority Families and Minority Gays and Lesbians'. *Marriage and Family Review*, 14 (3/4): 217-239.
- Morgan, D. (1992) *Discovering Men*. London: Routledge.
- Morris, L. (1985) 'Renegotiation of the Domestic Division of Labour' in Newby, H. (et al.) *Restructuring Capital: Recession and Reorganisation in Industrial Society*. London: Macmillan.
- Mowrey, M. E. (1996) 'The Accommodating Other: Masculinity and the Construction of Feminine Identity' in Boyd, S. B., Merle Longwood, W. & Muesse, M. W. (Eds.) *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Murata, S. (1992) *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Murray, S. O. & Roscoe, W. (Eds.) (1997) *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature*. New York: New York University Press.
- Muslim Council of Britain 'Muslim Statistics'. Date Accessed: May 5, 2004:  
<http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/statistics.php#1>
- Myslik, W. D. (1996) 'Renegotiating The Social/Sexual Identities of Places: Gay Communities as Safe Havens or Sites of Resistance' in Duncan, N. (Ed.) (1996) *Bodyspace: Destabilising Geographies of Gender and Sexualities*. London: Routledge.
- Nair, P. (2003) 'Moor-Veiled-Matters: the Hijab as Troubling Interrogative of the Relation Between the West and Islam'. *New Formations*, 51: 39-49.
- Nardi, P. (Ed.) (2000) *Gay Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Nasr, S. H. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (1975) *Ideals and Realities of Islam*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Neary, D. (2005) 'Ethnic Minorities and Retirement: Are the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Communities on the Road to Pensioner Poverty?' WPEG Conference, University of York, 18-20 July, 2005.
- Neisen, J. H. (1990) Heterosexism: Redefining Homophobia for the 1990s. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 1 (30): 21-35.
- Nicolaisen, I. (1983) 'Introduction' in Utas, B. (Ed.) *Women in Islamic Societies*. London & Malmo: Curzon Press.
- Nielsen, J. S. (1992) *Muslims in Western Europe*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

- Niranjana, S. (2001) *Gender and Space: Femininity, Sexualization and the Female Body*. London: Sage Publications.
- Norton, R. (1997) *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual: Queer History and the Search for Cultural Unity*. London: Cassell.
- Oakley, A. (1979) *From Here to Maternity: Becoming a Mother*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Oakley, A. (1976) *Housewife*. Penguin Books.
- O'Donnell, M. & Sharpe, S. (2000) *Uncertain Masculinities: Youth Ethnicity and Class in Contemporary Britain*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Odeh, L. A. (1993) 'Post-Colonial Feminism and the Veil: Thinking the Difference'. *Feminist Review* 43: 26-37.
- Orbuch, T. L. & Eyster, S. L. (1997) 'Division of Household Labor among Black Couples and White Couples'. *Social Forces*, 76 (1): 301-332.
- Ortner, S. (1974) 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?' in Rosaldo, M. Z. & Lamphere, L. (Eds) *Woman, Culture and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ouzgane, L. (2003) 'Islamic Masculinities', *Men and Masculinities*, 5 (3): 231-235.
- Parsons, T. & Bales, R. (1955) *Family, Socialisation and Interaction Process*. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) (2001) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Peacock, J. R. (2000) 'Gay Male Adult Development: Some Stage Issues of an Older Cohort'. *Journal Homosexuality*, 40 (2): 13-29.
- Perry, T. (1990) *Don't Be Afraid Anymore*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Peters, F. E. (2003) *Islam: A Guide for Jews and Christians*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Petersen, A. (2003) 'Research on Men and Masculinities: Some Implications of Recent Theory for Future Work'. *Men and Masculinities*, 6 (1): 54-69.
- Pini, B. (2005) Interviewing Men: Gender and The Collection and Interpretation of Qualitative Data'. *Journal of Sociology. The Australian Sociological Association*, 41 (2): 201-216.
- Piper, J. (1991) 'A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible' in Piper, J. & Grudem, W. A. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Crossway Books.
- Plummer, K. (1992) *Modern Homosexualities: Fragments of Lesbian and Gay Experiences*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Poole, M & Isaacs, D. (1997) 'Caring a Gendered Concept'. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20 (4): 529-536.
- Predelli, L. N (2004) Interpreting Gender In Islam: A Case Study of Immigrant Muslim Women in Oslo, Norway. *Gender & Society*, 18 (4): 473-493.
- Press, J. E. & Townsley, E. (1998) Wives and Husbands' Housework Reporting: Gender, Class, and Social Desirability. *Gender & Society*, 12 (2): 188-218.
- Presser, H. B. (1994) 'Employment Schedules Among Dual-Earner Spouses and the Division of Household Labor by Gender'. *American Sociological Review*, 59 (3): 348-364.
- Price, J. & Shildrick, M. (Eds.) (1999) *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Radcliffe, L. (2004) 'A Muslim Lobby at Whitehall? Examining the Role of the Muslim Minority in British Foreign Policy Making'. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 15 (3): 365-386.
- Radner, H. (1995) *Shopping Around. Feminine Culture and the Pursuit of Pleasure*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Rafai, J. (1993) 'Foreword' in Khan, S. M., *Why Two Women Witnesses??* Birmingham: IPCI (Islamic Propagation Centre International).
- Ratti, R. (1993) (Ed.) *A Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience*. Boston, Massachusetts, Alyson Publications Inc.
- Read, J. G., & Bartkowski, J. P. (2000) 'To Veil Or Not To Veil? A Case Study Of Identity Negotiation Among Muslim'. Women In Austin, Texas'. *Gender & Society*, 14 (3): 395-417.
- Reissman, C. K. (2000) 'Stigma and Everyday Resistance Practices: Childless Women in South India'. *Gender & Society*, 14 (1): 111-135.
- Riaz, H. (1991) *Halal (Lawful) and Haram (Un-lawful) in Islam*. Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Book Centre.
- Ribbens, J. (1994) *Mothers and Their Children: A Feminist Sociology of Childrearing*. London: Sage Publications.
- Rich, A. (1980) 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' in Abelow, H., Barale, M. A. & Halperin D. M. (Eds.) (1993) *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Rich, A. (1976) *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as an Experience and Institution*. New York: Norton & Company.
- Riley, S. C. E. (2003) The Management of the Traditional Male Role: a Discourse Analysis of the Constructions and Functions of Provision. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 12 (2): 99-113.
- Risman, B., & Schwartz, P. (1988) 'Sociological Research on Male and Female Homosexuality'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 14: 125-147
- Roald, A. S. (2001) *Women in Islam: The Western Experience*. London: Routledge.

- Robinson, J. P. & Milkie, M. A. (1998) 'Back to the Basics: Trends in and Role Determinants of Women's Attitudes toward Housework'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60 (1): 205-218.
- Robson, C. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (2002) *Real World Research*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
- Rodriguez E. M. & Ouellette S. C. (2000) 'Gay and Lesbian Christians: Homosexual and Religious Identity Integration in the Members and Participants of a Gay-Positive Church'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39 (3): 333-347.
- Rogers, W. S. (2001) *The Psychology Of Gender And Sexuality*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ross, C. E. (1987) 'The Division of Labor at Home'. *Social Forces*, 65 (3): 816-833.
- Ross, M. W. (1983) *The Married Homosexual Man: A Psychological Study*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Plc.
- Rossman, G. & Rallis, S. F. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (2003) *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Roy, O. (2000) 'Muslims in Europe from Ethnic Identity to Religious Recasting'. *ISIM Newsletter* 5, Page 1.
- Rubin, G. (1975) 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex' in Reiter, R. R., (Ed.) *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Ruby, T. F. (2006) Listening to the Voices of Hijab' *Women's Studies International Forum* 29: 54-66.
- Ruether, R. R. (1994) 'Homophobia, Heterosexism, and Pastoral Practice' in Nelson, J. B., & Longfellow, S. P. (Eds.). *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection*. Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press.
- Salih, R. (2000) 'Shifting Boundaries of Self and Other Moroccan Migrant Women in Italy'. *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, 7 (3): 321-335.
- Samad, Y. (1998) 'Media and Muslim Identity: Intersections of Generation and Gender'. *Innovation*, 11 (4), 425-38.
- Sanchez, L. & Thomson, E. (1997) 'Becoming Mothers and Fathers: Parenthood, Gender, and the Division of Labor'. *Gender and Society*, 11 (6): 747-772.
- Sander, A. (1997) 'To What Extent is the Swedish Muslim Religious?' In Vertovec, S. & Peach, C. (Eds.) *Islam in Europe: The Politics of Religion and Community*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Sandfort, T. (2000) 'Homosexuality, Psychology, and Gay Lesbians Studies' in Sandfort, T., Schuyf, J., Duyvendak, J. W. & Weeks, J. et al. (Eds.) *Lesbian and Gay Studies: An Introductory, Interdisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage Publications.
- Sarwar, G. (2000) *Islam Beliefs and Teachings*. London: Muslim Educational Trust.
- Scheurich, J. J. (1997) *Research Method in the Postmodern*. London: Falmer Press.

- Schild, M. (1992) 'Islam' in Schmitt, A. & J. Sofer, (Eds.) *Sexuality and Eroticism Among Males in Moslem Societies*. New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Schimel, L., (Ed.) (2002) *Found Tribe: Jewish Coming Out Stories*. Sherman Asher Publishing
- Schimmel, A. (1992) 'Foreword' in Murata, S., *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Schleifer, A. (1996) *Motherhood in Islam*. USA, Kentucky: The Islamic Texts Society.
- Schmidt, G. (2002) 'Dialectics of Authenticity: Examples of Ethnification of Islam Among Young Muslims in Sweden and the United States'. *The Muslim World*, 92: 1-18.
- Schmidt, T. E. (1995) *Straight & Narrow?: Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Schmitt, A. & J. Sofer, (Eds.) (1992) *Sexuality and Eroticism Among Males in Moslem Societies*. New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Schwalbe, M. & Wolkomir, M. (2001) 'The Masculine Self As Problem and Resource in Interview Studies of Men'. *Men and Masculinities*, 4 (1): 90-103.
- Scott, J. W. (1989) 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis' in Weed E. (Ed.) *Coming to Terms*. London: Routledge.
- Scroogs, R. (1983) *The New Testament and Homosexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Seale, C. (Ed.) (1998) *Researching Society and Culture*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Sears, J. T., & Williams, W. L. (1997) *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia*. Columbia University Press.
- Secor, A. J. (2002) 'The Veil and Urban Space in Istanbul: Women's Dress, Mobility and Islamic Knowledge'. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 9 (1): 5-22.
- Seidman, S. (1993) 'Identity and Politics in a "Postmodern" Gay Culture: Some Historical and Conceptual Notes' in Warner, M. (Ed.) *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Cultural Politics, Vol. 6). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Segal, L. (1993) Changing Men: Masculinities in Context. *Theory and Society*, 22: 625-641.
- Segal, L. (1990) *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities*. London: Virago Press Ltd.
- Seidler, V. J. (1997) *Man Enough: Embodying Masculinities*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Seidman, S., Meeks, C. & Traschen, F. (2002) 'Beyond the Closet? The Changing Social Meaning of Homosexuality in the United States' in Williams C. L. & Stein, A. (Eds.) *Sexuality and Gender*. Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Sexton, P. (1969) *The Feminized Male*. New York: Random House.
- Shadid, W. & Van Koningsveld, P. S. (2005) 'Muslim Dress In Europe: Debates On The Headscarf'. *Journal Of Islamic Studies*, 16 (1): 35-61



- Shaw, A. (2000) *Kinship and Continuity: Pakistani Families in Britain*. Amsterdam, London: Routledge.
- Shneer, D., & Aviv, C., (Eds.) (2002) *Queer Jews*. Routledge, Inc.
- Siddiqi, M., 'Homosexuality and Same-Sex Acts in Islam'. Date Accessed: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2001 <<http://www.al-fatiha.net/pamphlet.html>>
- Silver, H. & Goldscheider, F. (1994) 'Flexible Work and Housework: Work and Family Constraints on Women's Domestic Labor'. *Social Forces*, 72 (4): 1103-1119.
- Skeggs, B. (2001) The Toilet Paper: Femininity, Class and Mis-Recognition. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 24 (3): 295-307.
- Smiler, A. P. (2004) Thirty Years After the Discovery of Gender: Psychological Concepts and Measures of Masculinity. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*. 50 (1-2): 15-26.
- Sofer, J. (1992) 'Sodomy in the Law of Muslim States' in Schmitt, A. & J. Sofer, (Eds.) *Sexuality and Eroticism Among Males in Moslem Societies*. New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Speakman, S. & Marchington, M. (1999) 'Ambivalent Patriarchs: Shiftworkers, 'Breadwinners' and Housework'. *Work, Employment and Society*, 13 (1): 83-105.
- Spence, J. T. (1993) *Gender-Related Traits and Gender Ideology*: Evidence for a Multifactorial Theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64 (6): 624-635
- Spence, J. T. (1985) *Gender Identity and Implications for Concepts of Masculinity and Femininity* in T. B. Sonderegger (Ed.), Nebraska Symposium on Motivation: Vol. 32. *Psychology and Gender*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press
- Spence, J. T. (1984) 'Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender-Related Traits: A Conceptual Analysis and Critique of Current Research'. *Progress in Experimental Personality Research*, 13: 1-97.
- Spencer, C. (1996) *Homosexuality: A History*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Spender, D. (1980) *Man-Made Language*. London : Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Stimpson, C. (1987) 'Foreword' to 'The Making of Masculinities' in Brod, H., *The New Men's Studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Stowasser, B. F. (1994) *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sunderland, J. (2000) 'Parenthood Discourses: The Construction of Fatherhood and Motherhood in Parentcraft Literature'. *Discourse and Society*, 11 (2): 249-274.
- Sweasey, P. (1997) *From Queer to Eternity: Spirituality in the Lives of Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People*. London: Cassell.

- Tapinc, H. (1995) 'Masculinity, Femininity, and Turkish Male Homosexuality' in Plummer, K. (Ed.) *Modern Homosexualities: Lesbian and Gay Experience*. London: Routledge.
- Tarlow, B. (1996). Caring: A Negotiated Process that Varies' in Gordon, S., Benner, P., & Noddings, N. (Eds.), *Caregiving: Readings in Knowledge, Practice, Ethics, and Politics*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Terman, L. M. & Miles, C. C. (1936) *Sex and Personality*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Thomson, L. & Walker, A. J. (1989) 'Gender in Families: Women and Men in Marriage, Work, and Parenthood'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51 (4): 845-871.
- Thumma, S., (1991) 'Negotiating a Religious Identity: The Case of the Gay Evangelical'. *Sociological Analysis*, 52 (4): 333-347.
- Tidd, U. (2004) *Simone De Beauvoir (Routledge Critical Thinkers)*. London: Routledge.
- Tillikainen, M. (2003) Somali Women and Daily Islam in the Diaspora. *Social Compass*, 50 (1): 59-69.
- Tseëlon, E. (Ed.) (2001) *Masquerade and Identities: Essays on Gender, Sexuality, and Marginality*. London: Routledge.
- Tseëlon, E. (1995) *The Masque of Femininity: The Presentation of Woman in Everyday Life*. London: Sage Publications.
- Tyler, C. (2003) *Female Impersonation*. New York: Routledge.
- Ulrich, M. & Weatherall, A. (2000) Motherhood and Infertility: Viewing Motherhood through the Lens of Infertility. *Feminism and Psychology*, 10 (3): 323-336.
- Van Every, J. (1995) *Heterosexual Women Changing the Family: Refusing to be a 'Wife'!*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Vanita, R. & Kidwai, S. (Eds.) (2001) *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vertovec, S. (2000) 'Religion and Diaspora' Paper Presented At The Conference on 'New Landscapes of Religion in the West', School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, 27-29 September 2000.
- Wadud, A. (1999) *Qur'an & Woman: Re-Reading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wahaj, S. (2002) 'Feminine Men and Masculine Women' [Online Audio file]. Date Accessed: July 31<sup>st</sup> 2002. [http://english.islamway.com/bindex.php?section=lessons&lesson\\_id=270&scholar\\_id=9](http://english.islamway.com/bindex.php?section=lessons&lesson_id=270&scholar_id=9)
- Walby, S. (1990) *Theorising Patriarchy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Warner, M. (Ed.) (1993) *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Warner, S. (1993) 'Toward a New Paradigm For The Sociological Study of Religion in the United States', *American Journal of Sociology*, 98: 1044-1093.
- Warren, C. A. B. (1974) *Identity and Community in the Gay World*. New York: A Wiley-Interscience Publication.
- Watson, H. (1994) 'Women and the Veil: Personal Responses to Global Processes' in Ahmed, A. & Donnan, H. (Eds.) *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*. London: Routledge.
- Weeks, J. (1991) *Against Nature: Essays On History, Sexuality And Identity*. London: Rivers Oram Press.
- Weiler, K. (1988) *Women Teaching for Change: Gender, Class and Power*. Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey.
- Weinberg, G. (1972) *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Werbner, P. (2004) 'Theorising Complex Diasporas: Purity and Hybridity in the South Asian Public Sphere in Britain', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30 (5): 895-911.
- Werbner, P. (2002) *Imagined Diasporas Among Manchester Muslims: The Public Performance of Pakistani Transnational Identity Politics*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press.
- West, C. & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987) Doing Gender. *Gender & Society*, 1 (2): 125-151.
- West, C. and Fenstermaker, S. (1993) 'Power, Inequality and the Accomplishment of Gender: An Ethnomethodological View' in England, P. (Ed.) *Theory on Gender/Feminism on Theory*. Hawthorne, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Wetherell, M. (1993) 'Masculinity as Constructed Reality'. Paper for the Plenary in Feminist Issues in Research and Theory at Conference on Constructed Realities: Therapy, Theory and Research', Lofoten, Norway, June 1993.
- Wheelock, J. (1990) *Husbands at Home: Domestic Economy in a Post-industrial Society*. London: Routledge.
- Whine, M. (2005) 'The Penetration of Islamist Ideology in Britain'. Current Trends in Islamist Ideology Vol. 1. Date Accessed: July 29<sup>th</sup> 2005: [[http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/pubID.33/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/pubID.33/pub_detail.asp)]
- Whitehead, S. M. (2001) *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Wilkinson, S., & Kitzinger, C. (Eds.) (1993) *Heterosexuality: Feminism and Psychology: A Reader*. London: Sage Publications.
- Wilson, A. R. (2000) *Below the Belt: Sexuality, Religion and the American South*. London, New York: Cassell.
- Wilson, E. (1977) *Women and the Welfare State*. London: Tavistock Publications.

- Wilton, T., & Aggleton, P. (1991) 'Condoms, Coercion and Control: Heterosexuality and the Limits to HIV/AIDS Education' in Aggleton, P., Hart, G. & Davies, P. *AIDS: Responses, Interventions and Care*. London: Falmer Press.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1994) *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Wolf, N. (1991) *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. London: Vintage.
- Yahya, H. (2000) (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) *Perished Nations*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers.
- Yip, A. (2004) 'Embracing Allah and Sexuality?: South Asian Non-heterosexual Muslims in Britain'. in Kumar, P. & Jacobsen, K. (Eds.) *South Asians in the Diaspora: Histories and Religious Traditions*. Leiden, Holland: EJ Brill. Academic Publishers.
- Yip, A. K. T. (2002) 'Negotiating Space with Family and Kin in Identity Construction: The Narratives of Non-Heterosexual Muslims in the UK'. Chapter Presented at the *Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association 'Reshaping the Social' University of Leicester, 25-27 March 2002*.
- Yip, A. K. T. (1997) 'Attacking the Attacker: Gay Christians Talk Back'. *British Journal of Sociology*, 48 (1): 113-127.
- Zafeeruddin, M. M. (1996) (Translated from the Urdu by Syed Azhar Ali Zaidi) *Islam on Homo-Sexuality*. Karachi, Pakistan: Darul Ishaat.
- Zuo, J. (2004) 'Shifting the Breadwinning Boundary: The Role of Men's Breadwinner Status and Their Gender Ideologies'. *Journal of Family Issues*, 25 (6): 811-832.

PUBLICATION[S] PRODUCED AS A RESULT OF THIS THESIS

Siraj, A. (2006) 'On Being Homosexual and Muslim: Conflicts and Challenges' in Ouzgane, L. (Ed.) *Islamic Masculinities*. London: Zed Books.

